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SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL ACTION

(A HOLISTIC APPROACH)

Vimala Thakar

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SPIRITUALITY and SOCIAL ACTION

a holistic approach

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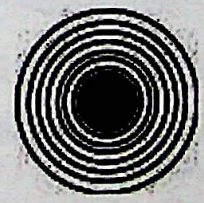

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Spirituality and Social Action

a holistic approach

(A collection of talks in English by Vimala Thakar)

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Contact : +91 99255 29096, +91 98254 16769
E-mail : vimalprakashantrust@yahoo.com

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Vimala Thakar

(15th April, 1921 - 11th March, 2009)

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Social Action without the foundation of Meditation in Consciousness is bound to be an ego-centred activity. Living in the state of Meditation in physical isolation or without its social manifestation is IMPOTENT AND VALUELESS.

Vimala Thakar

Camp - Villa Era
Sep 4 - 1989

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Publisher's Notes on the second edition

'Spirituality and Scocial Action' is a collection of the talks given by Vimalaji in Berkely, California in January, 1983. Vimalaji was asked to speak with social activists.

The first edition was published in 1984 by 'Vimala Programs California.' It was out of print for quite a long time. There was demand from the friends to reprint the book as second edition. We are thankful to Dr. Barbara Pennington to allow us to reprint. She not only sent the concent but also expressed her joy that the light of Vimalaji's wisdom is kept bright and rediant.

We are also thankful to friends for generous concern and help in the printing.

We are sure the book 'Sprituality and Social Action' will be helpful to its readers in many ways. We apologise to our readers for any unnoticed error in any form.

Vimal Prakashan Trust

15th April, 2018

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Vimala Thakar exemplifies the harmonious blending of intense spirituality and passionate social action. In both spheres she is the complete revolutionary. She has not followed the traditional paths of spirituality or of social service but has made a personal dicovery of truth and delved to the roots of social injustice.

The message of this book burns with the authenticity of her life.

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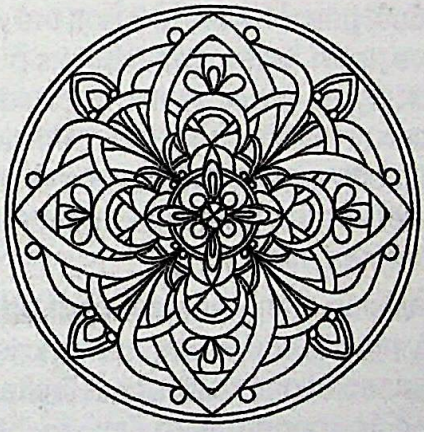
Part I

Discovering Wholeness



Spirituality is the seed,
social action is the tree born of it.

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Awakening to Total Revoluation

In dark days the call to revolution deeply penetrates the hearts of sensitive, caring people. When darkness engulfs the spirit of the people, and anguish and despair spread, it is urgent for concerned people to awaken, to rise to revolution. In a time when the survival of the human race is in question, continuing with the status quo is to cooperate with insanity, to contribute to chaos.

There is a yearning within each human heart to live a sane, harmonious, peaceful life, to live in the warmth of love. The spirit of love, truth, is not dead, but its pure radiance is masked by thick layers of decay. If love could be destroyed, it would have been annihilated by all the carelessness of which humans are capable, and if truth could be damaged, it would have been shattered by the hideous weapons of destruction created by the human mind.

The cleverness of the human mind has led us to the complex, horrifying and all-encompassing crisis that we now face. The familiar solutions based on a limited view of what a human being is, continue to fail, to be pathetically inadequate. Yet we pour vast resources into these tired solutions and feel that if we achieve a grand enough scale the old solutions will meet the new challenges. Do we have the courage to see failures as failures and leave them to the past ? Do we have the vitality to go beyond narrow, one-sided views of human life and to open ourselves to totality, wholeness ? The call of the hour is to move beyond the fragmentary, to awaken to total revolution.

The call is not to one of the revolutionary formulas of the past; they have failed; why drag them out again even in

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new regalia ? The challenge now is to create an entirely new, vital revolution that takes the whole of life into its sphere. We have never dared embrace the whole of life in all its awesome beauty; we've been content to perpetuate fragments, invent corners where we feel conceptually secure and emotionally safe.

We could have our safe little nooks and niches were it not for the terrible mess we have made by attempting to break the cosmic wholeness into bite-size bits. It's an ugly chaos we have created, and we try to remedy the complicated situation with the most superficial of patched-together cures.

PENETRATING TO THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL ILLS

As vitally committed human beings concerned about the quality of life we have created for ourselves and are creating for future generations, we must penetrate to the source, the roots of the chaos. Is not the source of our misery the acceptance of a very superficial, narrow view of the totality of living ? Are not the roots of chaos in our ignorance, denial of wholeness ?

The revoluations of the past, the attempts to ameliorate human misery, have focused on a fragment, either the outer life of socioeconomic, political structures and systems or the inner life of consciousness. Because the solutions focus on the partial, significant dynamics of living are ignored; the pretense is that they don't exist, but because they do exist and will not be ignored, they create great sorrow. The illusion of those dedicated to socioeconomic, political solutions is that once the structures and systems are reformed, the people will live in peace, harmony, cooperation, and the illusion of those dedicated to changes in consciousness is that the structures and systems, not ultimately essential,can be put into abeyance until inner freedom, transformation takes place.

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The fact is that life is a wholeness, an indivisible, non-fragmentable wholeness in which every element affects every other and nothing can be pushed aside as irrelevant. But we don't like to face the consequences of our essential relatedness. We are attached to a world view which asserts that divisions among people as friend or enemy are unquestionable, real, that bounderies forming nations are accepted actualities, the superiority of human beings to all other creatures is authoritatively factual. We have forced ourselves into tiny little compartments with all our prejudices and preferences and wonder why we cannot live in harmony, in peace.

Today with the scars of our past failures marring our existence and the fears of the future weighing heavily on our spirits, we can no longer go on with this dangerous game of fragmentation. We can no longer escape the fact that we are all bonded, equal in wholeness.

Science and technology have brought each of us into intimate relationship with all others. We are truly a global human family. Yet as a family we have not learned how to live together in peace, to live without violence and exploitation. We do not know a cooperative way of living which supports but does not deprive us of freedom. We live in fear of one another; even neighbours are viewed with mistrust, suspicion. It is a dehumanized, joyless life we endure because each of us inwardly is starved for love, friendship, affection.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Betrand Russell wrote :

"Man knows how to fly in the air like a bird, he knows how to swim in water like the fish, but how to live among other human beings, he does not know."

But now toward the end of the twentieth century, it is absolutely essential for human beings to learn immediately

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how to live together harmoniously. The clouds of war, even a nuclear war, are hanging very heavily on the horizon of the global human family. Not a country, east, west, south or north, is free of the tension and the fear of nuclear holocaust.

States and governments of the various countries of the world through nuclear weapons and nuclear armaments hold the population at ransom in a reign of terror, suspense and fear. We cannot go on living like this with the fear, the suspense hanging over all of us.

Even though our very survival is at question, we tend to look at the crisis superficially, emotionally, sentimentally. We have tried in subtle ways to absolve ourselves of any deep responsibility for the condition of the human family. We perceive overselves, or our small identity groups, as truly sincere and peaceloving, and we ascribe to outsiders, to those apart, to power-hungry villains, responsibility for aggression and wars.

Yet as members of societies that are preparing for war, how can we set ourselves apart as peaceloving and the others as violent ? This is, however, what we attempt to do. We read in the papers about the bombs, about nuclear warfare, chemical warfare, and we react very strongly; we insist that nuclear warfare must be stopped, it must not come, must be prevented. We see on the television or hear on the radio the news about massacres that take place in different countries, about wars taking place in different countries, and we feel how stupid it is to wage war, and wouder why the politicians, the statesmen, the administrators don't have the wisdom to stop all this nonsense.

This is the reaction perhaps of every sensitive citizen of the world. But who wages the war ? Are the wars results of individual decisions, decisions of governments, their cabinets, their ministers ? Where are the roots of the war ? Are they in the minds of a handful of individuals, ruling over

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their respective countries ? Or are the roots of war in the systems that we have created and have been living by for centuries - the economic systems, the political, the administrative, the industrial systems ? If we are not romantic, sentimental, and do not feel gratified just by reacting emotionally, by expressing how bad the wars are, but go rather deep, won't we find the roots of war in the systems and structures that we have accepted ?

We discover that there are systems and structures that inevitably lead to aggression, exploitation and war. We have accepted aggression as a way of living, We create and entrench ourselves in structures which culminate in wars. Retaining the structures and avoiding wars is not possible.

Why do we accept such structures or systems ? Because individually the psyche is obsessed with the fear of tomorrow, with the urge for security, and the mind is searching always for pleasure. Seeking pleasure, striving for security, and being inhibited by fear, are these not three causes that lead to the acceptance of systems and structures which we rationally understand are threats to peace ?

It is easy to feel, poor "us," we are the victims of government actions. They are responsible; we are not. But we will have to confess to ourselves that we participate indirectly in all the violence and the wars that are going on in the world. You and I, individually, are responsible to a very great extent. But we are habituated to accepting authority, to living by authority, whether religious or political or economic. We have been accepting these authorities and, therefore, we react and say, "They are responsible, not we." And we expect some political savior to come upon the world stage and save the world situation, or some religious or spiritual "super human" to descend from somewhere, emerge from somewhere and save the situation and so save us.

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Please see that individuals, you and I as individuals, have to realize how we are responsible, how we participate in creating this violence, how we cooperate with the systems, and thereby participate in the violence and wars. And then we must begin to inquire whether we can discontinue cooperating with the systems, whether we can stop participating in wars and explore alternative ways of living for ourselves.

We must go to the roots of the problem, to the core of the human psyche, recognizing that collective social action begins with action in individual life. We cannot separate the individual and the society. We each contain the society when we accept the value structure of sociery, when we accept the priorities worked out for us by the governments and the states and the political parties. If we accept their order of priorities, accept their value structures and evalutions, what is there left for each of us to live in our individual lives as something personal, original and firsthand ? We are only expressions of the collective, repeating the pattern created for us, and we feel happy because we are given physical security, economic security, comfort, leisure, entertainment.

Have we seen how through vast automated revolutions, individuals have been made to depend more on machines, than on other human beings, how our lives are depersonalized, dehumanized ? We have lost the warmth and grace of human relationships whether we are working in factories or offices, schools or colleges. Slowly and gradually we have been getting small doses, accepting them, because we were afraid to stand alone. We have been trained to be obsessed with the idea of security; the idea of tomorrow haunts us much more than the responsibility for today. We cannot be with the present and meet life as it is and as it comes, for we have been trained to be busy either with the past or with the future.

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DETERMINING A HEALING APPROACH

If there is a willingness to face these unpleasant facts, and be with those facts, then we can proceed, If we enter into self-pity and depression, then negativity may lead to cynicism and bitterness against every other person, bitterness against the system. And releasing such negative energy does not help solve the problems.

We have to stick with the facts as they are. Whether we like it or not, we are responsible participants in what is happening in the world.

If we sanction violence in our hearts, we are going to cooperate with whoever is waging war. We are participants because psychologically we sanction violence.

If we really want to put an end to warfare, we need to explore deep into the human psyche where the roots of violence have a strong hold. Unless we find the roots of violence, ambition, jealousy, we will not find our way out of chaos. Failure to eliminate the roots will doom us to endless miserable repetitions of the failures of the past.

Do see that the inner and the outer are delicately intertwined in a totality and that we cannot deal with the one successfully without the other. The structures and systems condition the inner consciousness and the conditionings of the consciousness create the structures and systems. We cannot carve out one part of the relationship, make it bright and beautiful, and ignore the rest. The forces of human and societal conditionings are powerfully entrenched; they will not be ignored.

By taking responsibility for an arbitrarily created fragment we try to dodge responsibility for the whole. "I am a spiritual person; I will leave politics to those interested in power. I am too sensitive for economics or politics." Or, "I am a social activist; I will leave the exploration of

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consciousness to the sentimental, superstitious people who like beliefs." Do see how dangerous it is to carve out a familiar territory and to take no responsibility for anything that is beyond what is personally comfortable.

Traditionally, there have been the two seperate approaches. One approach takes us toward the social, the economic, the political problems, and says, "Look here, unless the economic problems are solved or the political problems are solved, there will be no happiness and no peace, there will be no end to suffering. It is the responsibility of every individual to engage in solving these problems according to some ideology. Turning toward the inner life, the imbalances of psychological life, impurities of the inner life, that is not so important, that can be taken care of later on, for it is a self-centered egoistic activity. But the responsibility is toward the society, toward the human race, so keep aside all those problems of meditation and silence, inner sophistication, transformation for inner revolution, keep all that aside. First turn toward this."

And the other approach says, "The political, economic problems cannot be solved unless the individual is transformed totally. Be concerned with your psychological mutation, the inner, radical revolution. The political, the economic, the social problems can wait."

People have generally followed one or the other of these two conventional approaches : religious groups concerned with inner growth and inner revolution and social activist groups concerned with social service. But these divisions, one-sided efforts, have not deeply transformed, revolutionzed human society. As a people, as a race, as a global human community, as a global human family, we are in a very miserable plight. On one hand we have achieved astounding technological advances, and on the other, we suffer profoundly in the poverty of our psycholgical life.

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I wonder if the time has not come to transcend the conventional fragmentary approaches, to look at life from a holistic point of view, to take a holistic approach.

This holistic approach emphasizes that life is an indivisible, nonfragmentable wholeness. The essence of life, the beauty and grandeur of life, is its wholeness. Life in reality cannot be divided into the inner and the outer, the individual and social, the political and economic. We may make arbitrary divisions for the convenience of collective life, for analysis, but essentially any division between inner and outer has no reality, no meaning.

We have accepted the watertight compartments of society, the fragmentation of living as factual and necessary. We live in relationship to these fragments, and accept the internalized divisions - the various roles we play, the contradictory value systems, the opposing motives and priorities - as reality. We are at odds with ourselves internally; we believe that the inner is fundamentally different than the outer, that what is me is quite separate from the not-me, that divisions among people and nations are necessary, and yet we wonder why there are tensions, conflicts,wars in the world. The conflicts begin with minds that believe in, are related to, fragmentation and ignorant of wholeness.

The challenges that confront us as a global human family are ones that require holistic solutions, not partial, fragmentary solutions. If we want to survive, we must learn to relate to the planet as a whole, to view the earth as a holistic system, to have compassion for the human family in totality. We must transcend primitive, tribal perspectives, in which the world view is severely limited, and expand our knowing, our perceptions beyond petty divisions to oneness.

Viewing the world as a large pieced-together collection of fragments, some of which are labelled as friend and others as foe, begins internally. We map out our internal territories

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with the same positive or negative designations as we do external territories, and wars go on there as they do in the world. One part of the mind wants to take one action and another quite a different action; a conflict takes place which is no different in quality, although it is in scale, from that of the world wars.

If we are not related to ourselves in wholeness, is it any surprise that we cannot perceive the wholeness of the world ? If we believe ourselves each to be a patched-together, unmatched assortment of desirable and undesirable features, motives at odds with each other, undigested beliefs and prejudices, fears, and insecurities, will not project all this on the world ?

Maturity for the global human family requires becoming aware of and related to the reality of wholeness. Presently we are related to the fragments of modern society : to machines and gadgets, to theories and ideologies, to political and economic structures. Even with another person we are related to a peculiar arrangement of images we have about the person, not to the wholeness of the being.

If we realize the truth of our organic relationship to the oneness of all life, our attitude toward the earth, the plants and the animals, the Moon, the Sun, the stars will change radically; even our attitudes toward ourselves will transform completely. When we transcend the limited fragmentation of the mind, when we leave the enclosures of the mind, we are born anew to totality, to living the subtle, delicate, vital relationships with all beings. Then all the divisions of the me and the not-me, the mine and the yours, the inner and the outer, dissolve in awareness of oneness.

Because the source of human conflict, social injustice and exploitation is in the human psyche, we must begin there to transform society. We investigate the mind, the human

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psyche not as an end in itself, as a self-centered activity, but as an act of compassion for the whole human race. We must move deep to the source of decay in society so that the new structures and social systems we design will have a sufficiently healthy root system among the people that they will have an opportunity to flourish.

It is neither the current socio-economic structures alone nor the individual mind by itself that has created the chaos, the ridiculously sad plight we're unhappily enduring. Both are expressions of the collective consciousness that perpetuates inaccurate views, unhealthy attitudes about the nature of reality, the essence of the human being.

We must abandon the erroneous belief that enhancing a fragment will lead to evolution of the whole, that if we focus on one aspect of society and improve that, the whole of society will mature. We are discovering that evolution of society will require a holistic viewpoint in which all aspects of society and their relationships are considered relevant. We no longer will be able to allow the motivations and values that underlie personal and collective behavior to remain hidden and unexamined. It serves no lasting purpose for us to change the surface structures and behaviors while the deep foundations remain decadent and unsound.

The structures of society need to be transformed, but the hidden motivations and assumptions on which the structures rest need to be transformed as well. The individual and collective values and motives that give sanction to the injustice and exploitation of modern society become the focus of change as much as the socio-economic, political structures.

Those of us who have dedicated our lives to social action have considered our personal morality and ethics, our motives and habits to be private territory. We not only want

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our personal motivations and habits cut off from public view, but from our own recognition as well.

Traditioanally, the investigating of psychological weaknesses in relation to social action has been taboo, not acceptable. As long as a social activist provided service to others, it was considered irrelevant whether he or she suffered from greed, jealously, anger or fear. "It's my personal business, not yours," has been the attitude.

In truth, the inner life or the psychological life is not a private or a personal thing, it's very much a social issues. The mind is a result of collective human effort. There is not your mind and my mind, it's a human mind. It's a collective human mind, organized and standardized through centuries. The values, the norms, the criteria are patterns of behavior organized by collective groups. There is nothing personal or private about them. There is noting that could be a source or pride or embarrassment.

Privacy in personal life is not possible. This statement may seem shocking, but please do realize that thought is very subtle matter that emanates from each of us. The moment a thought is born, whether it is expressed or not, it emanates in the form of a wave, and floats in space, We may close the doors to our rooms, and feel that nobody knows our thoughts, but what we do in so-called privacy affects the life around us. If we spend our days victimized by negative energies, negative thoughts, if we yield to depression, melancholia, bitterness, these energies pollute the atmosphere. Where then is privacy ?

We need to learn as a social responsibility to look at the mind as something that has been created collectively, and to recognize that our individual expressions are expressions of the human mind. Our thoughts, feelings and emotions are all a playback of the memory contained in us. What we each call "my response" is really a response of the

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collective, the response of an Indian mind, a French mind, a woman's mind or a man's mind depending on the conditioning.

TRANSENDING TRADITIONAL BARRIERS

We need to understand that our minds go on repeating these patterns mechanically day in and day out, throughout our lives. Then all the pride and vanity about our thoughts and our values, and our criteria, our likes and dislikes disappear. After all in relationship these likes and dislikes, these preferences and prejudices, these conclusions and judgements create difficulties. We cannot be free and spontaneous with one another, because we cannot look at each other in inner freedom from the thought structure, inner freedom from the patterns of behavior fed into us. All of our responses are chained to them, chained to the past.

That's why as soon as two persons come together, they become self-conscious, they go on the defensive; the defense mechanism comes into play even before they begin to talk. Looking at each other is enough for the stimulation of the defence mechanisms.

And what happens on the individual level is manifest on the collective level, on the national level. Nations talk of peace, but devote enormous national resources to the contruction of elaborate defense systems. And in the name of defence, nations become aggressive, finding the most pathetic excuses to engage the young people of the countries in meaningless wars.

Inner freedom from the past, from the thought structure, from the organized, standardized collective mind is absolutely necessary, if we are to meet one another without mistrust or distrust, without fear, to look at each other spontaneously, listen to one another without any inhibition whatsoever. Then there will be a true relationship among human beings. Today

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it is only an adjustment of idiosyncrasies. It is dodging one another's weaknesses or angularities, peculiarities. It's a game of being on the defensive or the attack.

The study of mind, the exploration of inner freedom, is not something utopian, is not something self-centered, but it is urgently necessary so that we as human beings can transcend barriers that regimentation of thought has created between us. Then we will perceive ourselves, each as an unlabeled, human being not an Indian, an American, a capitalist or a communist - but as a human being, a miniature wholeness. We have not yet learned to do that. All of our responses are rooted in the past, tethered to divisions in the name of nations, religions, ideologies. As a result there is no freedom in our relationships. And in bondage suffering begins, mistrust, distrust, and fear take hold, aggressiveness and defensiveness prevail. Physically we are nevar one another, and psychologically we are miles apart.

Clearly the social responsibility for arriving at the inner freedom is a very relevant issue.

We study the mind because we want the harmony of peace to prevail, because we need the joy of love in our hearts, because we care about the quality of life our children will inherit. We do not undertake such study because we want something new and esoteric for the ego, some transcendental experiences to enhance our self-image. We study the mind as a social responsibility; we recognize that the roots of violence. injustice, exploitation, greed are in the human psyche, and we turn our clear precise, objective attention there.

The study of the mind, the psychological structure, does not require isolation, but it does require attentiveness. The movement of the mind is very swift. The shades of the movement are so subtle, that unless we learn to observe in a

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reaction-free way, it will not be possible to find out the modus operandi of the mind, to see how pride comes up, how vanity comes up and affects the chemical and neurological systems of the body, to discover what anger does, what fear does to us. To watch this movement requires a steadiness of attentiveness, but not isolation. Relationships are opportunities for an intimate encounter with the inner being. The fact of our being is that we are related, not isolated, not each a lone or lonely entity standing forlorn in this huge cosmos. We are not isolated individuals; we are organically related to the mysterious totality surrounding us.

We are related organically, and we have to live that relationship. To be attentive to the dynamics of the inner being is not creating a network of escapes to avoid responsibility. It is not continuing a false superiority that I am sensitive and you are not. It is simply recognizing that our personal relationships and our collective relationships are miserable affairs, that relationships stimulate fear and anxieties and throw us on the defensive. However much we yearn for peace, emotionally we are not mature enough for peace, and our immaturity affects everything we do, every action we take, even the most worthy of actions.

Study of the mind is not to create religious isolates, but to help each human being in society mature, take on social responsibilities in an intelligent, harmonious way which reflects the peaceful society we want to create.

The elimination of inner disorder takes place in the lives of those who are interested in being truly creative, vital, and passionate whole human beings, and who recognize that inner anarchy, chaos drains energy and manifests in shabby, shoddy behavior in society. To be attentive requires tremendous love of living. It is not for those who choose to drift through life or for those who feel that charitable acts in society justify ugly inward ways of being.

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The total revolution we are examining is not for the timid or the self-righteous. It is for those who love truth more than pretense. It is for those who sincerely, humbly want to find a way out of this mess we, each one of us, have created out of indifference, carelessness, lack of moral courage.

The challenge is to those who have the courage to pass across traditional barriers, to explore new territory unrestricted by the authorities of the past, to expand beyond fragmentation to awareness of the totality of living, the mysterious wholeness.

FUSING SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL ACTION

Traditionally we have created boundaries and exploration beyond our home territories has been only superficial. The social activists have staked out their territory, the outer life - the socioeconomic, political structures - and the spiritual people have staked out theirs - the inner world of higher dimensions of consciousness, transcendental experiences, meditation. The two groups have been throughout history contemptuous of each other. The social activists consider the spiritual inquirers as self-indulgent, and the inquirers have considered the activists to be caught in a race of activity, denying the essence of living.

There have been superficial blendings as spiritual groups take up social service work, and social activists join religious organizations, but a real integration of social action and spirituality at a deep, innovative level has not yet happend to any significant degree.

The history of human development has been fragmentary, and the majority of people have been content with the fragmentation. It has the sanction of society. Each fragment of society has its own set of values. Among many social activists, anger, hatred, violence, bitterness, cynicism are accepted norms, even though the effectiveness of these motivations for peaceful living has been seriously put in doubt.

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Indifference to the needs of the poor has had shocking acceptance among generations of spiritual people who considered higher states of consciousness much more significant than the misery of the starving millions.

A new challenge awaits us at the end of the twentieth century : to go beyond fragmentation, to go beyond the incompatible sets of values held even by serious-minded people, to mature beyond the self-righteousness of one's accepted approaches and be open to total living and total revolution.

In this era to become a spiritual inquirer without social consciousness is a luxury which we can ill afford and to be a social activist without a scientific understanding of the inner workings of the mind, the psychological structure is the worst folly. Neither approach is isolation has had any significant success.

The challenge awaiting us is to go much deeper as human beings, to abandon superficial prejudices and preferences, to expand understanding to a global scale, integrating the totality of living, and to become aware of the wholeness of which we are a manifestation.

As we deepen in understanding, the arbitrary divisions between inner and outer disappear. There is no question then that an inquirer will have to make an effort to be socially conscious or that an activist will have to be persuaded of the moral crisis in the human psyche, the significance of being attentive to the inner life. When awareness of the totality, of wholeness, dawns upon the heart and there is awareness of the relationship of the every being to every other, then there is no longer any possibility of taking an exclusive approach to a fragment and getting stuck there. We will in all our actions be whole, total, natural without effort. Every action or non-action will have the perfume of wholeness and creative living will pour out spontaneously, effortlessly.

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The holistic approach sees that life is a wholeness, a non-fragmentable, non-divisible wholeness. It's not pieces put together, sewn with the needle and thread of philosophies. It's a homogeneous wholeness.

A holistic approach is a recognition of the homogeneity and wholeness of life. Do these words homogeneity and wholeness touch the depth of your being ? Life is not fragmented; it is not divided. It cannot be divided into spiritual and material, individual and collective. We cannot create compartments in life - political, economic, social. Whatever we do or don't do affects, touches the wholeness, the homogeneity.

We are forever organically related to wholeness. We are wholeness, and we move in wholeness. It's very difficult to appreciate the depth and seriousness of the implication of these words because there is a curse of fragmentation upon our psyche. We can't see life as non-divided, as a non-divisible, homogeneous whole.

We see life as put together by our minds, our norms and criteria, our preferences and prejudices. We see life through the ego motives of being masters in control, the centers of all life, but in wholeness there is no center, no ego can be master. The desire, the drive to control life, to reduce the grandeur of life to petty manipulations and maneuverings makes us insanely fearful of death or any other event in life over which we do not have full control. By trying to create a private center apart from the totality, we are constantly at odds with the natural rhythms and events of life, and always tense trying to manipulate what essentially cannot be manipulated.

When we feel at odds with the intelligence of life, when we make an antagonist of life, it is easy to feel defeated, diminished because obviously the ego cannot prevail over life, cannot win, cannot be a victor over natural forces. The

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ego cannot defeat life, but it tries and in the attempt there is all the misery in the world.

As soon as there is awareness of wholeness, every moment becomes sacred, every movement is sacred. The sense of oneness is no longer an intellectual connection. Awareness vibrates within and leads to spontaneous action, not limited to any compartment that society has created.

The holistic approach simply does not recognize any division, any compartmentalization, though these may exist as facts in society. The awareness of oneness refuses to recognize separateness. So the holistic approach de-recognizes all the fragmentations in the name of religion, spirituality, all the compartmentalization in the name of social sciences, all the divisions in the name of politics, all the separations in the name of ideologies.

When we understand the truth, we won't cling to the false. As soon as we recognize the false as the false, we no longer give any value to it. We de-recognize it in daily living. A psychic and psychologial de-recognition of all manner of fragmentation is the beginning of positive social action.

MOVING TO HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS

What will happen when there is a de-recognition of fragmentation, an awareness of the wholeness and the homogeneity ?

The human problems will not be divided into political problems, economic problems, cultural problems, social problems, women's problems, men's problems.The perspective of the human problems, global problems, will go through a radical revolution, a drastic qualitative change.

Now an economist sees the economic problems from a specific angle; the terms of reference are the books on economics, their theories, ancient or modern. A politician

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looks at the problem of administration, problem of management, of human relationships, the problem of providing employment, the problem of protecting the person and property of every citizen. A politician looks at these problems only in the context of what he or she understands as politics, power politics, party politics. There is no holistic approach; there is not even a scientific approach.

If we evolve to a holistic approach, then the people's politics, the people's participation will become the main concern. Bringing about people's participation in administration, in management, in education, in the defence of the country will result in a participative political arrangement. Perhaps then there could be an authentic democracy.

The holistic approach will refer to people's politics not party politics, power politics. This approach will not view political ills in the light of political theory, but in the light of the whole human life. We will not have economic values and economic codes of conduct, political codes of conduct, political evaluations. There will be one value structure for the total life.

A holistic approach to social action will awaken the people to the need of approaching human problems not in isolation, not in an exclusive way, but with the awareness that life is whole, that all of us have to live in the wholeness in life.

If there were a holistic approach, would there be ecological problems today ? we're passing through an ecological crisis. Wouldn't we be aware while industrializing, computerizing our lives, using missiles, airplanes and other means of communication, the huge power of industry, wouldn't we be aware what the consequences would be in terms of pollution and contamination ? Because there is no holistic view, the ecological crisis has come about.

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Revolution, total revolution implies experimenting with the impossible. And when an individual who takes a step in the direction of the new, the impossible, the whole human race travels through that individual. Mahatma Gandhi was such a person. He expressed a new dynamics of political struggle based on what was for him non-violence, but for his colleagues, peace. Without hating the British, he eliminated the British rule from India. This was a dynamic unknown to history.

Gandhi was a committed human being, a citizen of the world, a member of the global human family. Though he was born and brought up in India, he belonged to the whole human race. And he was a man of faith. He recognized an intelligent force, an intelligent coming together of forces in the universe, not blind chaos.

The awareness of the totality, the whole gave Gandhi tremendous energy and the courage to take on enormous challenges. Wholeness was not intellectual for him, not theoretical. Because every moment of his adult life was saturated with awareness of the totality, he had sufficient strength, vitality, to be a revolutionary in all aspects of life.

There is much unexplored potential in each human being. We are not just flesh and bone or an amalgamation of conditionings. If this were so, our future on this planet would not be very bright. There is infinitely more to life than the material, the psychological; each passionate being who dares to explore beyond the fragmentary, the superficial into the mystery of totality helps all humanity perceive what it is to be fully human.

We are suffering throughout the world in the darkness of the misery we have created. By believing in the fragmentary and the superficial, we have failed to live together in peace and harmony and so darkness looms very large on the horizon and the menace of war spreads gloom over all of our lives.

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It's in such darkness that common people such as you and I feel the urgency to go deeper, to abandon superficial approaches that are inadequate and to activate the creative forces available to each of us as expressions of the wholeness. The vast intelligence that orders the cosmos is available to all. The creative, intelligent energies, the light ever present in our lives, is never destroyed by darkness. We may destroy each other in our ignorance but we cannot deny the intelligence, the totality, the wholeness of life. With such force potentially available to us, despair is not reasonable, is not possible.

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Evolving in Oneness

Viewed from a holistic perspective, each human being is a marvelous creation with unlimited potential for evolution not simply an isolated physical, biological, psychological event, destined to exist in ignorance. Just as there is exquisite beauty in all creation - the tender freshness of dawn, the majestic presence of the Himalayas, the intricate patterns of a leaf - there is also grandeur in a human being. To be human is not an ugly thing. Humans may make their lives ugly, but the essence of humanity is something splendid.

As a manifestation of the wholeness, each of us begins with a rich heritage. Born of wholeness, we are each whole, not a fragment of the totality, a chip of the cosmos, but a full and miniature cosmos. With all the energies, the intelligence, the creative forces of the cosmos available to us, our potential is vast, unlimited.

Unfortunately we are not educated to wholeness, but are trained to separation, competition and isolation. Uprooted early from wholeness, we develop a range of psychological instabilities, just as any element uprooted from wholeness will lose the stability, energy, nourishment of the whole. Essentially, we cannot be torn from the wholeness, but we can perceive we are and so fail to realize the vast strength, the intelligence, the creative force available to us.

When we perceive ourselves as limited, we do not realize the grandeur, the ecstasy, the richness of living as whole beings. We may make admirable achievements in the fragmented fields of our choice, but we have not yet met our essential challenge of realizing the absolute reality of our

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wholeness. We are experts in lop sided growth, but novices in evolving as whole human beings.

We have seen throughout history magnificent contributions to humanity, we have received the bountiful products of technological advances, yet as human beings we are unfulfilled, uncertain who we are, insecure about whether we will survive. We continue with pathetic attempts to fill our lives with more pleasures and comfort, more activity which permits us to race through life toward a feared death without ever feeling anything very deeply along the way, without ever pausing to reflect on what we are doing with our lives.

A life filled with an endless array of fragments is like a room with too many objects; it feels chaotic and oppressive. There is no beauty; there is no charm.

Wholeness has its own glory. When it moves in our lives, there is a wondrous vibrancy of harmony and rhythm, the sharp clarity of precise intelligence, the magnetism of love and compassion, the spontaneous flow of creativity. Our lives are no longer shoddy and shabby, but become noble, elegant with the natural radiance of the cosmos.

The leaders in our cultures have not shown us the way to wholeness. Even in social action and spirituality, the leaders have focused on fragments. There are those who have marvelous genius for revolution of the outer structures and those who have the fearlessness to go beyond the mental structures, the ego, and explore other dimensions of consciousness, but there are few who have the robustness, the passion to be revolutionaries in both the inner and outer, to live as full beings and rise to the challenge of total revolution.

In the past, it may have been possible for religious-minded people to withdraw into samadhi, ecstasy, and for social activists to wage revolutions using any means possible

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no matter the consequences to the human psyche, but the urgency, the criticality of the situation we're facing doesn't allow for such luxuries. We are sitting on a volcano in the world today, which is no place for imbalance or mistakes.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF TOTAL LIVING

If we are dissatisfied with the waste involved in fragmenation, the loss of strength, vitality, creativeness, and intelligence in preceiving ourselves uprooted from wholeness, we are ready to move from a limited to a holistic view of living.

As we journey from fragmentation to oneness, please do not be concerned that because each human being is a miniature wholeness there is no variety, no uniqueness, that each person is a bland, homogenized copy of every other person.

In the garden of life, there is an infinite variety of temperaments, talents, tastes - it would be a dull world if it were not so - yet all are intimately related at a deep level. All the different talents, capabilities, viewpoints are needed to deal with this complex world. All the special qualities are essential for a rich, meaningful life, yet the differences need not isolate.

It's extraordinarily beautiful to perceive, to deal with the part and maintain awareness of the whole. This is true social action and the essence of spiritual inquiry. If we can remain rooted in the whole with all its strength, creativity, and intelligence and yet revolutionize the structures and systems, confront injustice and exploitation, and provide for the starving millions, then we are worthy of the name human being and there is a light of optimism for humanity.

Awareness of the whole while dealing with the particular is not an art to be cultivated through academic study. On a theoretical level, awareness of wholeness does not nourish,

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does not expand our capabilities. Awareness must become an actuality; it must be lived.

We may begin to explore awareness with verbal investigation and academic study, but after we have understood intellectually, then further exploration of the truth of life must only take place through the act of living. Every relationship then is an opportunity for self-discovery, for personal discovery of the truth of life.

The sense of oneness or unity of life, the indivisibility and homogeneity of life is not a theory to be cherished in memory. It's not a philosophy to which we pay our intellectual loyalties. It is a fact of life which we express in every action.

An inquiry, commits us to the act of living, to life, to nothing less than life. It's an involvement of the whole being, not just of the brain. When the inquiry begins to mature, when we begin to live our understanding at every step, then the act of living, the sense of oneness results in compassion, which is essential to meaningful social action.

Compassion is a spontaneous movement of wholeness. It is not a studied decision to help the poor, to be kind to the unfortunate. Compassion has a tremendous momentum that naturally, choicelessly moves us to worthy action. It has the force of intelligence, creativity, and the strength of love.

Compassion cannot be cultivated; it derives neither from intellectual conviction nor from emotional reaction. It is simply there when the wholeness of life becomes a fact that is truly lived.

Compassion does not manifest itself when we live on the surface of existence, when we try to piece together a comfortable life out of easily available fragments.

Compassion requires a plunge to the depths of life, where oneness is reality and divisions merely an illusion.

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If we dwell at the superficial layer of being, we'll be overly conscious of the apparent differences of human beings on the physical and mental level, and of the superficial differences in cultures and behavior. If we penetrate to the essentials, however, we will discover that there is nothing fundamental that differentiates any human being from another, or any human being from any other living creature. All are manifestations of life, created with the same life principles, and nurtured by the same life support systems. Life essentially is flow and vibration with each being related to and dependent on all others. Oneness is absolute reality; differentiation has only transitory, relative reality.

It is not sufficient that a few in society penetrate to the depths of living and offer fascinating accounts, write lively poems or songs about the oneness of all beings. What is necessary in these critical times is that all sensitive and caring people make a personal discovery of the fact of oneness and allow compassion to flow in their lives. When compassion, realization of oneness becomes the dynamic of human relationship, then humankind will evolve.

We must begin by exploring beyond the known realms of physical and mental realities. We must discover whether there is more to life than the limited physical and mental dimensions.

Are we profoundly aware of the reality in which we live? We are aware that we have bodies capable of action, but limited action, and that we have mental structures which initiate behaviors, but limited behaviors. Are we aware of another dimension of life which has no limitations at all, which transcends the limited domain of physical and mental actions, is eternal, infinite, forever pure and loving?

Our education, culture has not guided us into direct relationship with this dimension. We are trained to use our bodies and minds but our hearts and psyches remain in

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ignorance. We have focused our lives on the material world and have become fixated with this dimension, but our lives are not realized in this dimension.

We are infinitely more than the material. Essentially, we transcend the limitations of the physical and the mental. The beauty of life, the wonder of living is that we share creativity, intelligence, unlimited potential with the rest of the cosmos. It would be most boring if we were mechanical beings, controlled only by physical laws of action.

If the universe is vast and mysterious, we are vast and mysterious. If it contains innumerable creative energies, we contain innumerable creative energies. If it has healing energies, we also have healing energies.

To realize that we are not simply physical beings on a material planet, but that we are whole beings, each a miniature cosmos, each related to all of life in intimate, profound ways should radically transform how we perceive ourselves, our environments, our social problems. Nothing can ever be isolated from wholeness.

We will not discover wholeness if we remain fixated on the material, if we race through life dealing only with the physical and mental energies. And if we don't discover wholeness, we will be endlessly ignorant of how to live fully, how to be deeply nourished, healed, revitalized.

We have yet to be guided beyond the material to the full dimension of living that merges action and non-action, motion and motionlessness, sound and soundlessness. It is motion that expends energy, but it is motionlessness that restores energy. It is sound that expresses vitality, but it is silence that restores vitality. Total living that balances action and non-action, sound and silence has never been a part of our education. We are tied to action, motion, sound and therefore, are chronically fatigued, depressed, psychologically unstable.

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When we are tired, worn-out, no one helps us to find total relaxation in positive non-action which could nourish us. We are taught languages but no one points out that words are born of sound and sound of silence, and that silence nourishes. That aspect of silence is new to us. We have elaborate networks of relationships, but no one makes clear to us that solitude is a complementary aspect of life that also nourishes.

In the wholeness of life, there is movement and motionlessness, speech and silence, relationships and solitude, the physical, the verbal, the mental. So when we become acquainted with motion-free isness, the sound-free silence, and relationship-free solitude then the wholeness is no longer simply a concept. It becomes a reality because we taste of silence, drink at silence, taste the nectar of solitude, are nourished by it.

EXPLORING NEW DIMENSIONS

When wholeness is not a concept, but an actuality in our lives, our relationships will obviously be transformed. On the intellectual level, we are conditioned to see others as separate beings, each with an isolated life based on self-centered motives and interests. When we operate intellectually, differences are the reality. Each person is a physical entity with its own center and self-identity. But when we live in wholeness, we perceive the diversity of the separate beings relative to the fact of interrelatedness, of interdependence, of essential oneness, of limitless love.

If we care deeply about our relationships, about the quality of our society, we'll not be satisfied with our current relationships, which are encounters of alienated beings each motivated by selfish interests. Instead, we'll move beyond conflict to communion.

Conflict occurs in relationship, whether personal or collective, when we each look at ourselves as subject and

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the others as object in a world of duality, when we assume that we must defend and attack to protect our private territories. If, however, we perceive each other with the perspective of the essential wholeness of all life, then the unity is much stronger than the diversity, then there is no private territory of the self to protect.

When we realize how intimately and at how many levels our lives are intertwined and interdependent, we naturally move into deeper communion with all beings. The superficial differences which seem monumental and insurmountable when viewed on the mental level, appear relatively minor and possible to transcend when viewed from wholeness.

In modern societies, we make an enormous fuss about the superficial differences between people, and simple disagreements escalate into international confrontations. Clearly, there is no appreciation of diversity as fascinating manifestations of oneness. We fear diversity, perceive it as a threat because we consider each of our lives as a separate, vulnerable enclave, we consider each of our lives as a tiny island in the sea of humanity.

If we believe in the separateness of our lives, if we accept that we must struggle against all others for existence, then obviously we will be in conflict; we will endlessly be defensive and aggressive in relation to others and never be at peace personally or collectively. It is this chronic tension and pressure of leading alien lives that has contributed to the decline in physical and psychological health in our societies, as well as to international conflict.

If we accept the tiny island view of our lives, then we must always be alert in every relationship to potential danger, either verbal or physical, that will damage our fragile enclosures. When we perceive danger in each relationship, easily react and enter into conflict, we begin accumulating injuries that harden into scar tissue on the psyche. And

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openness, sensitivity, communion either among individuals or nations become almost impossible.

Do we see that it is our images, based on self-centered views of the world that damage relationships? If we maintain the small enclosures, each governed by a selfish center, whether it is the personal ego or the national government, we are endlessly moved to conflict, tension, the misery of warfare.

We cannot aspire to peace and hold on to a separatist view of the world. We cannot be in harmony with all life and cling to our petty egos.

The nature of wholeness is peace and harmony, for if there are no essential separations, no divisions, where is the enemy, where is the conflict? When we operate from wholeness, peace is natural, but when we operate from self-centered egos, peace hasn't a chance.

If we don't identify with our egos and their reactions, if we don't accept the authority of ego-centered motivations, it may be possible to be free of automatic responses that inevitably lead to endless tension and conflict. If we evolve, mature beyond the perspective of each of our small egos in perpetual conflict with all the petty egos, we may feel less need to defend, react, attack as primary dynamics of relationship. We will not mature significantly, however, if we stay on the superficial intellectual level, motivated by the ego, accepting the idea of wholeness, but not living immersed in wholeness.

Awareness of wholeness leads inevitably to reverence for life. In awareness there is no possibility of exploitation, of callousness toward other beings; it is only when the ego gives itself primary importance and everything else secondary importance that the danger of domination, aggression arises. In holistic living, we are never separate from wholeness and

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the danger of the ego acquiring dominance is eliminated. When the ego loses its hold, a new tenderness, a new dynamics of relationship, comes into being and harmony, peacefulness become natural ways of living.

It is difficult for those of us who have been educated in modern societies to have true reverence for life, to live in compassion for other beings. We have given dominance to the mental structure and have accepted its tyranny, its pattern of dividing all of life and practice of exploiting rather than communing with our fellow creatures, with the mother earth.

The dominance of the intellect began after the cultural revolution of the Middle Ages, when we turned away from superstition, credulity, and turned to reason, to rationality. We used to say with great pride that man is a rational animal, a social animal. Turning away from the grip of superstitions, myths, credulities, beliefs, we learned to exercise the brain. With the help of the brain, we investigated the nature of bodily impulses, learned to control these impulses, and we created literature, art, science, various forms of entertainments.

When we proceeded a little farther, we began to believe that the intellect is the supreme authority, and that what is not grasped by intellect, what cannot be explained by the mind, is not true. We began a new belief cultivated in the authority of reason, in the authority of the movement of the intellect. We felt that what cannot be named by the intellect is not there; what cannot be explained by the senses, by the mind, is not there. The mind became the ruler.

This complex instrument has fascinating faculties. It has been conditioned, trained, refined over thousands of years, through religion, theology, education. And we have become very clever in using the brain. There is nothing wrong in that, but the totality of our life is not limited to what can be known and explained through the mind and the brain.

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Life is infinite. There are aspects of life which are not visible and tangible, aspects of life which the senses cannot reach. The space around us and within us cannot be explored through the movement of mind. Death cannot be explored with the help of words; love, eternity cannot be realized with the help of mind.

Mind is a useful instrument; the brain is a very precious organ exercised correctly, competently, but it is not the final authority. It cannot provide the central direction to our lives; it has not enabled us to live in the state of love, not enabled us to relax in the inner peace, invincible peace in which we shall not be damaged or shall not destroy anything in the world.

GOING BEYOND MIND AND BRAIN

The challenge is to explore that which is beyond mind and brain, that which is beyond time that man has created and space that man has measured. The old structures, ideologies are crumbling away, collapsing. Another dimension of consciousness, a new dynamic of relationship has to be explored.

The gravity of the situation we are in gives urgency to the need to explore the mind and brain, the movement of thought, the relationship of the movement of thought to the body. We have to explore the possibility that the thought process can discontinue, can cease altogether, and that we can move into another dimension. We have to ask whether there is a divinity at all.

The inquiry into the nature of reality, into wholeness cannot be a self-centered game of ambition - a game in which we announce we are very unhappy and want techniques for changing our lives. This inquiry will be a self-centered or selfish activity.

Inquiry must be based on recognition of the relevance of the exploration of another dimension of consciousness to

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the solution of problems arising out of the world situation. Then and only then we can conduct a significant inquiry. Please note that such an inquiry is not based on frustration. The serious inquirer cannot feel, "I have been frustrated; therefore, let me find a technique or a method for relaxation. Is there a method or technique for meditation? I want to get into samadhi. I want to have that experience."

When the 'I' is given that much importance, when the emphasis is on the 'I' getting something, rather than on the process of discovering and understanding, we miss the whole beauty of a spiritual inquiry.

Spiritual inquiry is an inner revolution: it is providing an opportunity for a radical transformation to take place within the being. Spirituality is a new approach to total life. To be spiritual is to be related to the totality of life. Nothing can be excluded.

The word spirituality does not denote any of the organized or institutionalized religions. It does not denote any sects, dogmas, or denominations; it conveys rather an attitude toward life in which nothing is excluded from our sensitivity, attentiveness.

To be spiritual is to be related to the visible, invisible and the infinite aspects of life simultaneously. True spirituality never provides any escapes for fear-obsessed people. We may find other escapes in the world, but they are not the essence of spirituality. Please realize this very clearly.

It's an adventure to be truly religious, to be a totally spiritual person. When we are committed to the totality of life and not to any walls created by man in the name of nationality, denominations, creeds, and dogmas, then we do not belong to a particular race, to a color, but to the whole global family.

In spirituality none of us escape the challenges. They will pursue us wherever we go. We carry within us the

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inheritance of the human race; the knowledge, the experience, the conditionings of the total human race are contained in each of our minds.

Please see that spiritual inquiry is not withdrawing from life and living, but bringing a qualitatively new approach to the act of living. It is not escape and it is not an ego-centered activity of collecting occult and transcendental experiences. We often talk about religious inquiry, spiritual inquiry, meditation in a very petty sense.

If we want to achieve something personal in spiritual inquiry, we are transferring ambitions from the physical and psychological to the religious field. Spiritual inquiry is not a self-centered, ego-centered activity. It is responding to the challenge confronting the human race.

We can have fascinating experiences in the realm of occult; this kind of spirituality is a good commercial proposition. People trade in it, make money by offering to stimulate certain psychic powers in others.

But religion and spirituality are precious, sacred things, not things for trading, or for establishing sects and gathering disciples.

If we play games in the name of spirituality, we are trying to protect the ego from the flame of revolution, the piercing force of truth. We are free to defend ourselves if we like, but it's no use pretending we are undertaking an inner revolution when we try to collect psychic experiences, play with the occult. True spiritual inquiry is to set ourselves free of the prison house of the ego; it is not to make the prison house more interesting by the addition of psychic experiences, occult practices.

Many of us work very hard to give a spiritual appearance to our lives, to delve into the mysteries of the invisible, occult, to take up healing practices, to become enmeshed in extra-

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sensory experiences, but unless the being is set free of the tyranny of conditionings, there is no spiritual inquiry worth the name.

The desperate need of the human race is not the cultivation of psychic powers and extra-sensory experiences; the urgent requirement is for mature, whole human beings who are free of ego attachments, emotional imbalances and who are aware, attentive, sensitive, creative and fully alive.

IMPLEMENTING THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

The holistic approach to social action requires, obviously, the participation of whole human beings; that is, human beings who are aware of the totality and live that totality as they function as responsible members of society. The whole human being is one who is not tyrannized over, thrown off-balance by the conditionings of the mind, and is not heavily ego-centered in relationships, in actions within society.

If the person is enslaved by emotional imbalances, strong attachments to theories or belief systems, he or she will move in society from a center of imbalances and attachments which will prejudice every action. The objective clarity to see the situation as it actually is and to act from insight and awareness will not be there.

If we truly care about the earth and the peoples of the earth, we'll take the opportunity for healing all of our imbalances, emotional wounds, intellectual arrogance and grow in wholeness. We desperately need sane, mature, concerned human beings who are willing to leave aside the psychological mechanisms of power, attachment, aggressiveness, who feel secure enough in wholeness to drop ego-centered behavior, to create a new society fit for human beings.

We don't know what it is to come together as mature human beings who can relate in harmony, openness, freedom

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without all the defense structures, the tricks of aggression, power coming into play. We don't know what it is to look at a situation from a holistic approach, to lay aside traditional theories, preferred ideologies and look freshly, clearly, attentively at the situation as it actually is. We are used to struggle, to emotional conflict of viewpoints, to the wounds of subtle or direct aggression; we are exhausted, discouraged, scarred by relationships either personal or collective, by continual activation of the defensive, aggressive mechanisms, somehow accepting all this as the nature of living.

Have we realized that the way we are living, we are missing the beauty of life? We are missing the passion and the vitality of life. We are just repeating patterns of behavior for years and years, seeking to gain pleasure, trying to avoid pain, and getting too much of both. Sometimes we get stuck in pleasure and sometimes in pain and so miss the movement of life. We are drawn away from the mainstream of life, and then our lives begin to shrivel.

Are we asking ourselves how we can break this pattern? Are we asking how we can live, how we can find a way of living in which we do not need to engage in juvenile games, cooperate with those who talk of peace and prepare for war, in which we can avoid the chronic imbalances, the insanity? And are we telling ourselves we would like to preserve our sanity, not play games of hate, revenge, anger, violence in the name of country, religion, ideology? Have we declared ourselves out of these games, knowing that war, that violence cannot solve problems? Do we see that one evil cannot be eradicated by introducing another evil?

The changes we want, that all of us need to make desperately, are not likely to be brought about by any outside agency. If we are waiting for some savior to come, some super human being to come, and set us free of our

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weaknesses, distortions, and perversions, we are nourishing a very dangerous illusion.

Life has given us intellect, given us brains, given us self-conscious energy and we can cope with the crisis situation facing us. We need to be passionate about peace and we need to mature in self-respect and self-reliance.

The people in countries dominated by organized and institutionalized religions develop a kind of helplessness. In India, for example, the masses are told it is their fate to be poor, it is their fate to starve. They are told it is their *karma* of previous births and lives that they are miserable and that nothing is to be done.

This sense of helplessness is totally unnecessary, however, for it is within the power of human beings to bring about change, to let a transformation take place within themselves that will lead to transformations in the social, political, economic structures around them. Poverty, starvation, exploitations are not created by any god; they are human-made and thus alterable by human beings. Self-respect, self-reliance; must be present if change is to occur, for if we feel helpless, we can do nothing. When we feel collective helplessness, this feeling stimulates many negative energies that lead to collective depressions, collective melancholies that are extremely debilitating.

If we want to avoid or alleviate this helplessness, if it is urgent for us to keep the crisis in our psyches from becoming permanant, we need to promote self-respect and responsibility. These qualities are miracle producing, for in their presence helplessness vanishes, depression and melancholy disappear.

BECOMING FULLY RESPONSIBLE

We have the strength for total revolution, but please recognize that inner revolution is not a game, a light hobby to

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be kept on the sidelines of life. If we are attentive to the inner life, many images we have about ourselves will be shattered. We don't live in the reality of our being, we live in the images that we have created about ourselves, others have created about us. We have become used to those images about ourselves, and we live in them. When the image is broken, we notice the violence contained in us, and then we are shocked. "Goodness me; people look on me as a non-violent person, a leader of a non-violent movement and there is so much violence in me."

Then we would like to wish it away. We would like to hide it, but it can't be concealed. It expresses itself through our eyes, the tone of our words, the way we move in space. Whatever is contained, is expressed on the sensual level, without our knowing it. As the flowers have scent, the inner movement of the mind, the impulses have their odors, their scents. The thoughts and feelings have their scents and odors. If there is anger, greed, lust, then the very breath is different. Because thought after all is subtle matter that emanates from the body.

We may articulate it; we may not articulate it, but as scon as a thought or a feeling is born inside, there is a chemical movement and a movement of sound in the body which affects the blood circulation, the perspiration, the breathing rhythm. We are complex organisms in which everything is interrelated. There is no scope or no place to hide or conceal anything - overeating, undereating, oversleeping, undersleeping. We feel we act in the privacy of our rooms. But the body is a great broadcaster. Our speech, our expressions, our whole physiognamy, what we do with ourselves, reveals all.

Attentiveness becomes painful when it shatters images. If there is the humility of a genuine inquiry, if there is an urge to discover and to learn, find out the meaning of life beyond

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mind and brain, then we are not bothered if the images are broken. We collect the pieces of the broken images and throw them out of the window. When we understand what we really are, we become truly humble.

All the burden of images is gone, and there is a lightness about us. There is nothing to carry, nothing to pretend, nothing to hide and conceal. A new simplicity comes about. Inner inquiry or investigation shows itself at every step in every movement and relationship. It's not wishful thinking. When the inner disorders are gone, when the inner conflicts or tensions subside, and there is a new peace within, it's bound to express itself.

Since, fortunately, there are no saviors around in the world, no leaders who would guide, no models that we would imitate and copy, it is our privilege to discover for ourselves how to preserve our sanity, freedom, and initiative living in this mad world. It is not a very sad problem or an ordeal; it is a challenge. The more complex life becomes the more serious our challenges. And challenges stimulate energies within us. When confronted with challenges, we cross the frontiers of the possible and step into the realm of the impossible. So this is a very interesting time to live. We have to act collectively, we have to act individually, there is no time to lose. Because the industrialization, the advance of science and technology has been fast in the last fifty years, extremely fast in the last twenty-five years, we have to educate ourselves to cope with that speed, to keep pace with it, to handle it.

To act as a fragment out of a limited view of the nature of a human being or from a narrow world view will only add to the mischief. We can no longer ignore our nature as a miniature wholeness with unlimited potential. We cannot dismiss our heritage of wholeness.

We have the potential to live compassionate, humane genuinely harmonious lives. To deny the potential, to continue

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with insane, barbaric lives is to deny peace to the fellow creatures who roam the earth, is to be ungrateful, callous to the earth, is to be negligent about the quality of life for the young.

We are not weak, helpless, foolish. We are equal to the challenges. The first, and perhaps only challenge, is to became aware of who we really are as human beings. With awareness comes compassion and then right action flows. We are the light that will dispel the darkness.

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Inviting Inner Freedom

Inner freedom is not a goal, an ideal, an aim toward which we have to struggle. Let us be clear that it is not to be acquired, obtained, achieved. And no one is going to confer it on us. It's not a result of any action. Inner freedom comes about quite naturally with understanding the nature of life, understanding the essence of our being.

Freedom means that we are no longer trapped by the conditionings of the mind, the tyranny of the ego. We are no longer driven by emotional imbalances, desire to possess, fear of tomorrow. We are free of the past with all its habits, prejudices, wounds, images of ourselves. We are not victims of our psychological structures.

As free persons we walk lightly on the earth. We have left behind the anxieties, compulsions and have laid down the heavy defense structures we have carried for years. We are unyoked from the fears of tomorrow, fears of death and are unchained from tired habits, conditioned ways of behaving. With all the shackles gone, we can walk lightly, tenderly.

As free persons we live in the present, not forever brooding on the past, opening old wounds, or worrying about what's going to happen in the future. Each of us will no longer ask, "Will I be secure? Will I have some horrible sickness? Will my loved ones leave me? What will happen when I die?" This is how we tear ouselves apart with futile anxieties, brooding.

Living in the present, we are in open, spontaneous communion with our surroundings without the motive to acquire or dominate. We watch a sunset and are in direct

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relationship with the beauty without the mind chattering, "Oh, it's not so beautiful as the one I saw last month. I wish my friend were here so I could really enjoy it."

We are fully present with a glorious moment; we feel the joy deeply, but when it is over we leave it and move on, without clinging, grasping, trying to suck more out of it. And in relationships, we are capable of deep communion; we are not limited to superficial meetings of images and egos, clashing of defense structures, trying to dominate or submitting to domination. We are out of the petty games and into a dimension where love is a natural state of being.

The love that fills our hearts, is not exclusively for a chosen few, but has the passion to encompass all beings, all the fellow creatures, the tiniest blossom, a leaf on the wind, the bird that awakens us in the morning with its song, the mountain covered with radiant snow. With a deep love for all humanity in our hearts, not a superficial verbal expression that only leads to hypocrisy, but a sincere love that only freedom confers, we move in compassion and right action, for serving humanity is choiceless.

EXPLORING INNER FREEDOM

Is it clear that the urge for freedom must be free of any motive for acquisition, for enhancement of the self? If we want to be free so that we will have no responsibilities, and will be better able to indulge our desires, to do whatever we want to do, isolated from any concerns about humanity, we have misconceived freedom.

Freedom means perceiving the misery of the human race as it actually is. It means that we do not hide from the facts, we do not cloud reality with theories, biases, defense strategies. We see the unhappy conditions - the starvation, exploitation, poor living conditions, humiliations of people - and we do not put any barrier between ourselves and the full

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impact of suffering. When there are no elaborate structures, separating us physically and psychologically from suffering, we feel the sorrow and act spontaneously, compassionately.

When we live in freedom, we remove all the psychologial sophistication, the clutter of ego-centered existense with its elaborate motivations, and we awaken to the beauty of simplicity. If a fellow creature suffers, we act to alleviate the suffering, either individually or collectively, delving to the roots of the problem.

When we are tied to ego-centered motivations, our actions are contrived, convoluted. We do not act until we have considered all the ramifications, the possible implications for our self-interests, and as we delay and vacillate, the vitality of the challenge is lost. At present, most of us do not know what it is to act spontaneously with the flow of compassion. We know all too well the complicated maneuverings of the ego structure to grasp something for the self. We know the burden, the tension of constantly being alert to enhance our interests at the expense of the needs of others. We know all too well the suffering we cause ourselves when the heart wants to be compassionate, but the ego overrides it with callous motives and behaviors.

To free ouselves from the bondage of the ego and self-centered motives while we free others of the bondage of economic and political exploitation is essential. The nature of bondage is to limit, to restrict. The bondage of the ego structure restricts, not only our service, but our passion and compassion.

When we identify with the ego and all its fragmentary movement, there is no possibility of freedom. The ego is a petty tyrant that imposes its will in both subtle and not very subtle ways which insure its security. It does not want the being to be egoless, merged in oneness, for it would lose its supremacy as the master of life. It would like to expand its

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fiefdom, acquiring more ideas, ideologies, beliefs or more material possessions to enhance its vanity, pride, to strengthen security. It wants to build walls, to fortify itself against attack. It's willing to be aggressive, if it feels threatened and to embroil the organism in the most ugly of behaviors on whims of jealousy, greed, anger.

The movement of the ego and the movement of freedom are antithetical to each other. The ego summons the energy of the person to serve its self-centered needs. Freedom releases tremendous energy to serve the needs of humanity, of all beings.

Actions born of freedom have an entirely different quality than that of actions mired in psychological bondage. The actions that flow spontaneously in freedom are not owned or posessed; they don't have the stamp or imprint of a personal ego, and they are not calls for attention from the public or bids for power. The actions of freedom have a lightness, an elegant simplicity which is only possible when there is no desire for action to result in personal enhancement.

If we are truly committed to social action, then we must be committed as well to inner freedom. Freedom from the bondage of the self-centered motives of the ego structure permits a global perspective, a concern for the wholeness of a situation without the restriction, limitation of self-interest. If we are tied to the perspectives of our individual egos, obviously we cannot view the whole of a problem from many perspectives and discover the root causes. Whether we are aware or not we each will be limited by our unilateral view.

We will not, obviously, crave freedom until we are deeply discontent with bondage. The urge for freedom has no force until we are clearly aware of our bondage. When the bondage begins to hurt, when it pricks our self-respect, when it creates a sharp discontent, then we will be forced to move out of our complacency.

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OBSERVING THE FORCES OF BONDAGE

We must become deeply aware of our bondage if we value freedom. We begin to watch our behavior throughout the day; we notice the fear, the anxieties, how much behavior is controlled by acquisitiveness, how we compare ourselves with others and want to became something that we are not. When we watch our own lives, then there is the pain and agony that the awareness of the bondage creates. If we don't observe this in ourselves, we are only theorizing about freedom.

It is, of course, much more comfortable to watch another's behavior, observing the jealousies, fears, violence, anger, to discuss the damage of slavery, the conditionings in human society, and to analyze the mechanical, repetitive behavior that society encourages but unless observation pierces the heart, it will not have the force to lead us out of bondage.

We need to stay very close to our own lives and not move away from the facts of our behavior by escaping into theories, into other more interesting lives. If bondage is to be eliminated, it must be from firsthand, close attention to the content of each of our lives.

To be attentive to our lives is not to become very excited about and centered on our petty little minds. The dynamics of mind, the workings of the psychological structure, the play of the ego must be deeply understood and we have the greatest opportunity to study what's most readily available. We can explore our own mental structure to a greater degree than the mind of anyone else. And as the bondage is within each of our minds, psyches, we begin there.

We must see for ourselves, not as an assertion by another, that thought is tethered to the past, that when thought moves it brings all the conditionings of the past with it. Someone can tell us that through thought, freedom is not

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possible; someone can explain to us logically that thought necessarily deals with life as fragments, but unless there is a personal observation, the assertions will remain as new acquisitions of the ego and will have no vitality.

The explanations of others can point in the right direction, but we will have to make the journey through the mind ourselves. The explanations help in questioning the supremacy of the mind and the ego, which may be necessary since for centuries we have accepted blindly that the problems are out there in the world and not within the individual psyche.

We begin by watching our lives with scientific interest, an objective observation. If we become very excited, very subjective about everything we see in ourselves, we fall into a trap and will quickly lose vitality for observation. If we judge all of our actions and feel very proud of our good qualities and ashamed, embarrassed about deficiencies, we are caught in the ego game and haven't really seen anything factual.

As long as we cling to the idea that this is "my mind, my own, personal mind," we'll have a strong tendency to want to look as good as possible. But if we observe the mind, from a nonpersonal viewpoint, from the perspective of nonownership, simply observe our minds and how they function, we'll be less trapped by judgments.

To be attentive to the psychological structure, doesn't mean we must disappear somewhere, and give up all relationships, responsibilities. The art is to stay within the movement of relationships, to continue with work, to be a responsible citizen and to be attentive to the play of the mind. But we'll have to be very alert for the mind is subtle, wily, full of tricks.

It's a tremendous thrill to see the beginnings of anger or jealousy or greed, not simply to be caught unawares when

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the emotion is full-blown and has us in its grasp, but to see the first tiny movements of emotion. Where does it spread, what does it do to our behavior? Just as there is joy in exploring an unknown wilderness, there is a delight in exploring the inner territory, in watching the volcanoes explode without any movement of defense, judgment, sense of ownership.

If we have never observed anger in ourselves from subtle beginnings to full explosion, we will always be caught in its force. We may try to suppress the behavior of anger, but still it will do its damage and we will not be free of it.

Attentiveness without any movement of the defense structure has its own intelligence. But the automatic tendency is to bring in defenses, judgments and to move from observation to justification, evaluation. We may say to ourselves, "My mother or my father was an angry person. I can't help it; I've had an unhappy childhood, I am an angry person because of that. Everyone in my family gets angry; that's how we express ourselves. The hypocrisy, the injustice, the violence in the world makes me angry." All the explanations, justifications may be true, but they prevent direct perception of what it is that anger does to our bodies, to relationships, to the work we do.

If we defend any emotion, anger, fear, jealousy, we own it, we cling to it, and we accept a life in which emotional imbalances can wreak whatever havoc they like. If we judge the emotions - "I like this one, I don't like that" - we each split ourselves into two parts: that which judges and that which is judged. If we get depressed every time we observe the inner life, soon the ego will find ways to avoid, put off attentiveness, and we'll be set for unexamined lives of inattentiveness.

Without defense, judgment, depression, we are attentive to the inner dynamics while we go about our daily lives and carry on whatever work we do. We notice how the

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mind moves, what we think about during the days and the nights, and we may become aware that certain thoughts repeat themselves and seem to have an energy of their own. We may see that even if we want to relax at the end of a difficult day, we cannot; the thoughts, the worries continue without cessation and keep our bodies tense, exhausted. The worries, the obsessions continue through the night and though we want to be refreshed to meet the challenges of the new day, we find that we are deep in fatigue.

Even though we go away to a quiet restful place, we may see that our thoughts won't relax, the play of our mental tapes about events in the past or anxieties about what will happen tomorrow has no off switch. It continues on its own, unless distracted by some entertainment, another movement of the mind.

UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

Do we ever ask ourselves, "What is this mind, this mental structure? What is its hold on my life? What would happen if it let go of its hold; if I didn't think all the time?"

Each of us is, of course, equipped with a brain which processes thoughts through electro-chemical movements, but the brain is only a part of the body, not the master. Something else has developed within that wants to control all of life, to masterplan all movements, to possess as much as it can for its own, to make divisions between what is me and what is not me, what is mine and what is not mine.

These self-centered tendencies, we call for convenience the ego, the I-consciousness. In the East, the ego, the I-consciousness, has been considered the source of all human misery and various techniques have been developed to go beyond the ego, to move out of the grip of the ego. *Mantra*, use of sound energy, *Tantra*, use of sexual energy, *Jnana*, use of intellectual energy are all means of eliminating the bondage of the ego.

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For the socially conscious, *karma yoga* has been a means for becoming free of ego-centeredness. When we serve others, we do a *karma* or an action for others; then we have no time to be obsessed with the ego, with the I-consciousness. And at the moment we are free of the I-consciousness, of its self-centered activities, its obsession with itself, there comes about a purification. The main purpose of *karma* or action is purifying the heart, giving it an opportunity to be away from contamination, from self-centered activity.

There is a kind of selflessness that comes about in *karma yoga*. When we are doing *karma* for the society, for the people, for the others, there is an intimate encounter with the people, interaction with the people, so the oneness of life comes alive.

If we are acting only for ourselves, for gratifying our emotions or our ambitions, then such a *karma* creates bondage, according to the theory. But when the energies are released and allowed to move into relationships with others, not with a desire to get something back, physically, materially, economically for ourselves, but only to share, then the *karma* will not create any network of bondages but will release us from the imprisonment of our minds and egos. That's the logical presentation of *karma yoga*.

A scientific approach says that perhaps the only bondage is acceptance of the ego as real, and the agreement to live under its mastery. If we understand clearly that the ego has only a symbolic, a conceptual existence, we will be free of its tyranny.

We know that in thinking about something, we use words, which are symbols having no physical reality of their own but only representing reality. We see a tree and may later write the word tree or say the word tree. The word tree is quite obviously different from the physical reality of the tree.

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The word has none of the physical qualities of the tree. It doesn't have the feel of the bark, the shape of the leaves, the smell of the sap. The word tree only represents the object tree as a written or spoken symbol.

It's very convenient to use symbols, for if we don't want to dig up the tree and carry it everywhere with us, we can still communicate by using the accepted symbol in the language of the country where we are. The symbols are mutually agreed upon contrivances for the sake of thinking or communication. We easily accept the use of symbols and understand that they have no physical reality. We don't expect leaves to grow out of the word tree or milk to flow from the word cow.

But when we deal with very abstract symbols such as time, space, the ego, we are easily trapped into believing they have reality.

Does time have any physical reality? Are there any hours, minutes or seconds in nature? There is nothing like time in reality. Life is timeles, but for the convenience of collective living, the human mind fragmented timelessness into measures of hours, minutes, seconds, and built clocks to keep track of the invented time. And the same is, of course, true of space. Nature has no kilometers or miles. They are measurements created for the convenience of communication.

The me, the self, the ego is also a concept; it has no physical reality. The body has a physical reality, but the me as the center from which all our actions spring has only conceptual reality. It is a concept.

A child is born and we give a name to the child to distinguish it from other children. We are giving a name to the form, but the life in it is nameless. The life contained in the body is unnameable, unmeasurable but we give the name and we teach the child, "You are Harry; you are Susan." And we repeat it so many times the child identifies with it.

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Look now how the seed of the me, the self is sown by us in the child. We teach the child to identify with the name, with the form, with the gualities of the form. We say, "You are fair, you are brown, you are dull, you are brilliant." The child grows with layers of identification and layers of conditionings, specifying how to react. Amalgamation of all that creates the me, the ego.

The ego is a contrivance like any other concept, but we have become so accustomed to live from that center we feel we are really the ego and forget that it is a concept we have created, as we forget that time is a concept we have invented.

We become afraid, frightened by the idea of tomorrow. In life there is nothing like yesterday and tomorrow. There is only the here and now. Life is isness, pure and sheer isness. All the superstructures of concepts are created by us, and they are lovely toys to play with, but if we forget they are toys, they are symbols, if we forget they are created for the convenience of living together in society, we will mistake them for the totality of life.

Mistaking symbols and concepts for reality is the beginning of bondage. There is no other bondage but this identification.

DENYING THE AUTHORITY OF THE EGO

If we observe our lives, we will notice that all the activities of the ego, the I-consciousness are acquisitive. The incentive for the ego to move is to gain something for itself. It may be sensual, sexual pleasure, it may be acquiring money, wealth, property, it may be acquiring prestige. Whatever it is, the dominant motive of the ego is acquisition.

Societies want to acquire, to own, to possess; countries, nations want to acquire, to own. This urge for owning, for possessing is incorporated in us and all our movements in life are governed by the acquisitive tendency.

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Because the ego has predominantly a motivation of acquisition, ownership, and possession, it would like to compete with others, compare itself with others. We have created a competitive society and a comparative society out of this basic and fundamental tendency of acquisitiveness.

We are dominated by the acquisitive tendency of the ego which wants to own, to possess, not only material objects, not only thoughts and ideas, but also human beings. We want to own and possess colonies, countries, races. Whether it is colonization, imperialism, political or economic, it has its roots in this acquisitive tendency, governing and directing our lives individually and collectively.

Perhaps someday we'll wipe out the state boundaries on the earth, but we'll create new ones because the root of our movement is acquisitiveness. Then we will fight for the Moon or for the Mars.

A related motivation is the lust for domination. If we don't have anything else to dominate, we dominate children, dogs, cats, dominate our own bodies. And domination easily leads to violence.

Another related motivation is the fear that whatever we have acquired, whatever we own and possess will not be with us tomorrow. The urge for security is the result of fear. We are afraid. Acquisition, domination, and fear go together.

The ego, the I-consciousness, although it has no physical reality, is only a concept, has gained mastery in our lives. We accept the contrivance of the ego and cooperate with its motivations. The cooperation with the motivations of the ego not only creates misery in our own lives but prevents living collectively in a harmonious, peaceful way.

If we are aware that the ego is only a contrivance and has no reality, and we observe directly the movement of the ego - the acquisition, domination, fear pattern, the network

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of emotional imbalances, the ceaseless activity of thought - we may decide we don't want to go on living this way, being enslaved, tyrannized over by something that isn't even real!

We recognize that we cannot create a new society, a peaceful harmonious, cooperative structure out of the bondage of ego-centeredness. The ego allows no peace either individually or collectively. Do see this as a fact in our own lives, firsthand, through direct perception. If we want to revolutionize the collective structures and systems, we must begin with the inner revolution of freeing ourselves of the bondage of ego-centeredness.

Observation of the dangerous movement of the ego, recognition that the ego is only a concept, a symbol that has no real authority, will help us refuse to accept any dangerous contrivance as the center, the master of our lives. This is the essence of inner revolution.

We cannot be whole human beings and ego-centered persons at the same time. One will cancel the other. When we choose wholeness then we de-recognize fragmentation which is the nature of ego-centered living.

ELIMINATING DISORDER FROM OUR LIVES

If we find there is a sincere urge to live in wholeness, to move away from the ugliness of fragmentation, we may still find living as a whole human being difficult because there is disorder in our way of living.

Elimination of disorder on the physical, the verbal, and the mental level reveals the organic harmony that is within. When there is no conflict between the body, the mind, the brain, when they do not function in contradiction to one another, the natural rhythms and harmony emerge.

This harmony contains immense unconditioned energy. As disorder drains us of energy, so harmony and orderliness

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release new energy and vitality. Then there is passion behind whatever we do. When no weakness, no shabbiness, no shoddiness is left, we vibrate with immense energy which is born of harmony.

The physical, the biological structure has its beauty. The impulses incorporated in the body, have their beauty. We have to respect the senses, to give them full scope, to enjoy the pleasures of life, without making a cult of pleasure. But the body cannot become an authority. If the impulses of the body, assume authority, what happens? We must eat, take meals, but if we become obsessed with food, if there is greediness, then we suffer. When food becomes an authority, eating consumes a disproportinate amount of energy. Sex has its beauty, its place in life, but if it becomes the center around which all activities are regulated, if the whole life becomes sex centered and sex assumes authority, then this obsession diminishes all other aspects of life.

If anything becomes an authority, if sleep, for example, becomes an authority, the whole structure becomes sluggish, slow. There is no vibration of energy, there is no passion, no intensity. Over-sleeping and laziness makes the body dull, the senses numb, they lose their natural sharpness, sensitivity. The relationship with body is an important part of life, is something beautiful, but if it becomes an authority, if the part begins to control the whole, obviously distortion and perversion occur.

Suppose the body has not become the authority, but the mind becomes the authority. Then the likes and dislikes, the preferences and prejudices of the mind govern our behaviour. We like some object, we run after it, want to possess it, own it. We like some individual, we run after that individual, want to own and possess. We do not like some individual: a colleague in the office, someone working in the factory, someone working in the school with us. We begin to

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worship that dislike. We pamper our minds, we accept the authority of the dislike, and then we find ways of avoiding an encounter with the person.

If there are strong likes and dislikes, then whether it is family life or social life, we begin to close in, build up exclusive relationships. The dislike develops into a hatred, hatred develops into contempt and again there is a distortion and perversion in mental and intellectual behavior. Haven't we seen people who hate one another, because they hate each other's ideologies? A difference of opinion, intellectual disagreement, having different ideologies is understandable, but why should they hate one another?

First comes the disagreement, then dislike, then hatred. Human relationships become distorted. If mind becomes the authority, many distortions can take place. Your mind accepts the authority of the *Vedas* and somebody else's mind accepts the authority of the *Koran*, and somebody else's, the *Old Testament*. Then we take out our weapons and arms and ammunition and fight against one another in the name of *Hinduism*, *Islam* or *Christianity*. Hasn't that happened for more than twenty centuries?

Disorder is disharmony. We cannot expect to create a harmonious new society when our inner foundation is full of disorder. If the body and the mind are at odds with each other, out of tune with each other, can there be harmony?

Much of the time our bodies are engaged in one activity and our minds in another. The body may be going through the physical demands of the day, bathing, cleaning, cooking, driving a car, and the mind is chattering away to itself oblivious of what the body is doing. While we are at home, the mind is still at the office; while we must deal with something in the present, the mind is brooding about the past; while we are in one relationship, we are thinking about other relationships. Inattentiveness brings a two-way split in each

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of us, but if we bring in the emotions then there are three parties residing in one individual, and we find we are doing one thing, thinking about something else and feeling something entirely different. Are we then whole human beings?

If we are distracted, inattentive, then we miss the simple joys of life. When the sense organs come into touch with an object, there is a kind of beauty, but it is a delicate beauty that will be missed if the full attention of the being is not there. We meet eternity, not in the elaborate, sophisticated manmade rituals in designated holy places, but in being fully aware while carrying out the simple activities of daily life.

When we make habits out of the daily acts of living, we miss the opportunity for communion on the sensual level; we turn to amusements, but soon find ourselves bored. And after awhile we find all of living rather tedious. We turn to more exotic enjoyments, but we can make a habit out of anything and so dull any possible pleasure. Eventually there is dull, grey cast to everything we do, and we find ourselves dying slowly to the joys of living long before physical death takes place.

Any act of living met with full attentiveness releases energy, gives back energy. When we act with awareness, attentiveness, there is no question of having enough vitality to meet the challenges of the day. Whenever we are fully present while carrying out on action, we are revitalized. The physical body will, of course, become tired with exertion, but with a little rest revives. Mentally, we are fresh, vital, alert, equal to the challenges of the day.

There is a tendency for socially-conscious people to put all their energy into the outer structures and live with considerable disorder in the personal realm, turning the responsibilites of daily living into habits which require little attention. But disorder on the personal level is bondage.

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There is a tremendous loss of energy in habitual behavior. What starts as simply careless, sloppy behavior turns to addiction and soon has an authority, a grip on our lives, and we have lost the freedom to act any other way. Any kind of addiction, whether it's drinking coffee or tea, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, sexual abuses, rapidly becomes self-destructive and harms the nervous system. When we try to carry out our social responsibilities, we find ourselves handicapped by damaged nerves; we don't have the physical vitality, robustness for the vast work of revolutionizing society.

It's no use taking a moral stance with ourselves, it will only lead to inner conflict. But if we become attentive to the actual facts of what we are doing with our bodies, our nervous systems, our minds, the organic intelligence of the being has a chance to operate and we perceive directly what is damaging and what is not. When we observe in ourselves what is false, harmful, poisonous, we don't need to be told to drop it.

Even though we see our habits as damaging, we may cling to some of them, because we derive some perverse psychological pleasure out of the behavior. We feel secure with old habits, however harmful they are; they are our own, they are part of the image we have of ourselves.

We put our bodies through all kinds of tortures because we have accepted the supremacy of the ego structure, the psychological structure. But if we really love freedom, if we want to free ourselves and free humanity, we'll question very seriously the authority of the ego, we'll very deeply, with attentiveness, look at the supremacy of the psychological structure over the body.

We can be aggressive against our own bodies. Something that we want doesn't happen and we deprive the body of sleep and food. It's taking revenge on the body. It's

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violating the sanctity of the body. We can be aggressive inwardly condemning ourselves, belittling, humiliating ouselves. Or we can be aggressive against others.

Most of the time fear and anger are the root. Fear is the root of aggressiveness towards others and anger is the root of aggressiveness towards ourselves. Often when we cannot express anger, it goes inward and results in a variety of self-aggressions.

Another disorder, which most obviously affects the affluent countries, but affects in subtle ways developing countries, is the acquisition of material goods beyond the simple needs of living.

The perspective of the total human life will result spontaneously in voluntary restraint on the acquisition of material goods. When we see life as wholeness, we see the context in which we are living, not only the local context, but the global context, there grows a capacity for voluntary restraint on the acquisition of material goods, not as a denial, not as a negative activity, but as a positive expression of the concern for fellow human beings.

CREATING HARMONY IN LIFE

Elimination of disorder and chaos bring us face-to-face with inner harmony. The body, the brain, the cerebral energy, the energies that are beyond the physical and psychological fields, have an innate harmony which is manifested with the elimination of disorder.

When disorder is eliminated, we become aware of the harmony within, we become attuned to the harmony in nature, the cycles of seasons, the interaction between the five elements, five principles of life.

Freedom and harmony naturally go together. If we free ourselves from the drives of the psychological structure, compulsions of the ego, we discover new rhythms of nature.

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Do we ever go through a single day without being driven by compulsions? Has there ever been a day when we move in harmony with the rhythms of nature, the rhythms of the body? Or do we get up with the alarm, race because there is work to do, eat by the clock or when we feel insecure and want to be filled, stay up late to amuse the intellect, drink coffee to stay awake, take pills to go to sleep?

Modern society does force us into these patterns, our conditionings compel us to chaotic behavior, but are we so weak and helpless that we have to cooperate, participate in unsanity?

Total revolution requires freeing ourselves of the authority of the psychological structure, the ego, and the conditionings of society that have been internalized by each of us. Intellectually sophisticated people may have clearly seen through the dangers of accepting the authority of socio-economic, political structures.. They are not naive about the motivations, the value structures, the mechanisms of exploitation, and a spirit for revolutionizing these outer structures naturally gathers fire, intensity. But the same people can be quite unsophisticated about the motivations, the value structures, the mechanisms of the ego, and accept its tyranny, authority blindly.

Most of us, though intellectually highly developed, are emotionally immature. We can deal with the sophisticated technological culture the human mind has created, but emotionally, when we try to come together in relationship, we act like adolescents. We act like teenagers because we haven't educated ourselves emotionally, we haven't given the same attention to the emotional, psychological structures as we have given to the intellect. The intellect has supremacy; the emotions create all manner of havoc; the bodies disrupted from their natural rhythms become easily fatigued, prone to disease. We call this living.

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To free living, the inner and outer, from this insane mess we have created, we must rid our being of all authority whatsoever and start afresh with attentiveness, awareness. The intelligence for sane living exists in the being. In freedom it is released. It isn't that cosmic intelligence takes care of order in all the rest of nature and leaves us as human beings to figure it out for ourselves. We are, although we try to deny it, natural beings with the same elements, principles, subject to the same forces as all of nature.

We will have to design the new socioeconomic, political structures, create the processes of society using the intellect, but it is not the thought structure that will tell us how to live sanely. In the last two centuries, we have given the intellect, human reason a chance to improve the quality of our lives. The industrial revolution did bring about significant changes in material ways of living; but the consumer goods, all the needs provided, all the luxury and leisure, the benefits of the technologically advanced society, have not helped the human being to transform the quality of consciousness. Even change of collective structures hasn't been successful in creating a more mature, sane quality of life for human beings.

There is deep within the heart of each of us a love of freedom. When we see a magnificent eagle, soaring majestically through the skies, riding on the winds untethered by any burden, something thrilling resonates in our being. In some mysterious way, we are intimately related to the free soaring of a wild creature.

Physically we walk on the earth, but our spirits soar in freedom. We have known little of freedom in our heavily conditioned lives, but our spirit has not died.

As freedom loving beings, we must break all the chains of bondage by refusing to accept the authority of the conditionings, the I-consciousness, the ego, and become attentive to everything we do, think, feel so that bondage has

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no opportunity to sneak in unnoticed. We must put our lives in order, releasing the harmony and rhythms and allowing organic intelligence to become expressed in sane living.

With the intelligence, vitality, compassion of freedom, we will work wherever we are, with all the talents at our disposal to make inner and outer freedom possible for all humanity.

To be responsible for total revolution does not mean that any one of us is individually responsible for the future of the human race; it does mean, however, that each of us contributes as fully as we are able. The contribution of each of us in the past has been unnecessarily hampered by the acceptance of inner bondage and the gross tendency to personal disorder which has sapped energy and destroyed the vitality of the bodies.

In total revolution, we are inviting a quantum leap in the potential of each human being to contribute to society. Growing from bondage to freedom releases innumerable cosmic energies of intelligence, creativity, compassion which have been left dormant. The possibilities of a truly creative society are within the reach of free human beings. The challenge is clearly before us.

And the response ? It's up to each one of us.

Freedom cannot be conferred. It only comes when there is a heartfelt yearning to end slavery on this earth, both outer and inner, for every human being, for every creature, once and for all.

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Opening to Love, Faith

Life has charm because it is essentially a mystery. It defies our most elaborate techniques for measuring, quantifying its nectar. We have hints of the sweetness, suggestions of the subtle fragrance, but to grasp it, to convert it into something measurable, to spell it out in books, learned journals, is not possible. The mental structure, the intellect of the human being divides life into facts, words, concepts and processing these electro-chemically, is more limited than the wholeness of cosmic intelligence. What is limited can never understand what is unlimited, what is finite can not grasp the infinite.

Is it possible, however, that the human being, by putting aside intellect, can be aware, can commune with wholeness, with the unlimited? If we yearn to explore the tantalizing mysteries of existence that pervade birth, love, death, we will have to go beyond the rational, the limited, the finite.

But how are we to go beyond, to exceed our apparent limitations? We know that our limitations arise for the most part from our conditioning, both that acquired during our individual lives and that stemming from thousands of years of human heritage. Is it possible there is more to us than our heritage, than our conditioning? Is there something in us that has not been conditioned, a dimension of wholeness, filled with love, intelligence, creativity, that has not been touched, molded by history, that remains pure, uncontaminated in its powerful isness? Is there a stillness, a peace within us which has never been violated by chaos, anarchy, the acts of human misery?

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Some of us will respond immediately to these questions out of despair and say, "Yes, it is our only hope." Others will respond equally quickly out of intellectual arrogance and say, "No, it's superstitious rubbish." Neither response is appropriate, for if we respond emotionally or intellectually, we lose the opportunity to discover the truth. There is, after all, a beauty in not knowing, in not being certain, in being open truly to discovering something for oneself.

As a group we tend either to confine the mysteries of life to churches, mosques, temples and to keep them trapped within unnatural walls for observance on holy days or we reject then entirely as being unworthy of the rational mind. In either case there is prejudice and so no freedom to explore.

We have made elaborate attempts to scale down the infinite, eternal, mysterious totality to human level, to fit the unconditioned into our human-made conditionings. We create forms representing the formless, and worship them for consolation, security, companionship. We can do such things if we like, but let us not have any illusion that these acts are personal discoveries of the truth of existence. Dogmas, rituals, ideologies are all necessarily of the human mind, and therefore limited. They cannot bring us into communion with the unlimited.

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH OF EXISTENCE

As socially-conscious people we might ask ourselves why we should bother with a personal discovery of the truth of existence. Isn't this a luxury, an escape from the enormous challenges facing us today, when people are suffering, in utter misery?

For socially conscious persons, a personal exploration of what is beyond the conditionings is essential. We already have explored well what is possible to do within the

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conditioned realm. We've seen the quality of life we've been able to develop in this realm, and few of us are satisfied with what has been achieved. We go on repeating with some variation what has brought no success. It is true that some people in affluent countries are more comfortable, have more pleasures, but if we look at the quality of life, if we look into the eyes of people, watch their faces,, we see none of the radiance of love, joy, peacefulness; instead, there is despair, desperation, anxiety, bitterness. With tremendous sorrow in the heart, we watch the bright spirit that radiates in the eyes of children became dim as children mature into adults, as they are dulled by injustice, exploitation, lack of love, affection, tenderness.

Collectively we have no confidence that the conditioned solutions of the past offer promise. These solutions encourage ego-centered, selfish, acquisitive behavior that certainly is not the bright hope of tomorrow. The hideous magnitude of the nuclear arms race that the superpowers are bleeding their countries to sustain should make abundantly clear once and for all that scientific and technological advances do not promote the quality of human life. We live in terror, are held as hostages of these hideous inventions of the human mind. We can hardly live sane lives, knowing that we are a hair's breadth from complete destruction.

We have been thrilled in the past by scientific, technological displays of power, inventiveness, labor-saving devices, electronic computing machines, people walking on the moon, but somehow there seems no place for people in all this, the reverence for life has been lost or ignored. Values significant for collective living have been pushed aside as old-fashioned, and we find that the inventiveness that was to enhance the quality of life has instead threatened the very existence of living creatures.

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We cannot take much pride in the quality of personal and collective life that giving full sanction to science and technology has created, let alone what it has done to our fellow creatures, to the earth itself. Going on producing more hideous weapons, consumer goods that those in developed countries don't need and those in the developing countries can't afford, scarring the earth to manufacture what isn't essential for a meaningful life, repeating political strategies based on power politics and economic exploitation does nothing to enhance the quality of life of those in developing countries starved of adequate nutrition and those in affluent countries starved of love, of any meaning to life.

If we are serious minded, we won't go over the same territory with vain hopes that a small adjustment here, a minor enhancement there is going to make a big difference; we'll have the courage to perceive the false as false and leave it behind.

LEARNING TO COMMUNE

We must recognize that we've come to the end of the line with employing the mental structure to enhance quality of life, and we ask ourselves if there is anything beyond the mind, a different dimension than the physical, emotional, mental dimension which has dominated our consciousness, if there is a way of living in wholeness, using the mental, physical structures when necessary, but not accepting their mastery.

We have been conditioned by society to exploit nature for some purpose, to plunder its resources, to assume mastery over it, and to derive some pleasure through contact with nature. But have we ever been with nature in stillness, without any motive whatsoever, without intending to take away anything either physical or psychological? Can we be with nature in openness, peacefulness, in quiet communion without trying to make an experience out of being there?

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If we are able to be with nature without the tendency to name things, to compare them, to chatter away about how lovely they are, without the tendency to bring in all the baggage of civilized life, the worries about the office, the home, about what will happen the next day, we may discover that in stillness there is sensitivity to rhythms not possible when motives, thoughts, emotions come into play. We may learn that we live our organic relationship to nature much more deeply when we have no desire at all to acquire any new experience or any new possession. When the motives, the desires move, we are brought back to ego-centeredness and the artificial boundaries the ego creates.

As human beings in modern society, we are constantly called to action by the demands of daily life and with each action there is a motive. It may be something entirely new for us to discover motive-free stillness in which we do not want to persuade, to acquire, to enhance our self-image, to store something for the future, to leave any mark at all of psychological movement.

Imagine we are with the early dawn, in the gentleness, the tenderness of the awakening of the day simply in communion, sharing the delicate movements of the morning in quietness, in openness. If the mental structure grasps the moment, takes control of the moment to entertain itself intellectually, or in inattention continues its repetitive automatic movements, obviously we will lose sensitivity, openness will. diminish.

If we are simply there in stillness, as the tree is there, elegant in its non-demanding steadiness, there are no boundaries between ourselves and the dawn. We are with the dawn in awareness of the whole, of the light dancing delicately through the darkness, bringing radiance, subtle prisms of color to the drop of dew on the tip of a leaf, stirring to life the shadows of the night, gently calling the creatures

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out of slumber. And we are quietly there as the earth responds in soft murmurings, exquisite songs, rhythmic, harmonious movements in tune with the pulse of the earth. The ego, would like to place boundaries, to protect its territory, to make distinct what is me and what's not-me, but if we don't accept the authority of the ego, we can discover being without boundaries, divisions of any kind.

Have we ever wondered how nature manages to go on without the assistance of science and technology? Are we surprised that the dawn, the sunset, the tides manage to be so precise without the assistance of calculators and computers?

If we are with nature without the desire to dominate, to prove our mastery, superiority, we may be aware of the intricate orderliness of nature, the marvelous, profound relatedness of all beings, the timelessness of the rhythms not bound by beginnings and endings, the capacity of the earth to be healed. We have tried to impose human-made superstructures on nature, not content with our natural place in the order of the universe, and have wreaked havoc on the face of the earth, but nature simply goes on in its rhythms, healing harmonious rhythms.

We can damage the earth, destroy plant and animal species, pollute the waters and the air, put our mark of careless destruction on every piece of land, but we cannot destroy life. We can kill each other, plot to decimate the human race, but life will go on. The part, the fragment will not destroy the whole. However monstrous the forces of destruction the human brain invents, these forces are not stronger than the forces of the wholeness.

The isness of life simply isn't touched by the destructive games of the human race. The isness of life, far vaster than the physical, mental, dimensions with which we are familiar,

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is not polluted by the gross dimension, the least subtle dimension of existence. Life exists. Life is.

This is not to say that we are not responsible for the stupid things we do to the earth, to each other, to fellow creatures. Of course, we are responsible for our own insane behaviors. The misery of the world is not God made. It has been created by human beings out of greed, ignorance, callousness, lust for domination. We are responsible for the mess we have created, but let us not glorify the magnitude of our destructive capability and believe human beings will put an end to life. We humans are arrogant even about our destructive capabilities.

PERCEIVING THE MEANING OF FAITH

That life is will remain an intellectual theory, an assertion by another to be stored in memory unless it is a personal discovery. We do not need to store more religious beliefs, acquire more theories about the meaning of life, but we might discover something important if we are open, sensitive to a firsthand encounter.

If we are with the night sky full of the brilliance of distant stars that seem close enough to touch, if we stand still among the giant redwoods towering over us in their centuries of growth, if we are in the middle of the sea completely surrounded by the rhythmic, alive waters, we may in moments of calm, live our relationship with life and in these egoless moments faith may be born. It is not the faith of books, ideologies, belief structures, conditioned heritage, but a faith that emerges quite naturally when awareness of inconceivable intelligence, orderliness, relatedness, oneness of all living, fills the being in a timeless awakening.

Faith in the intelligence, orderliness, creativity of life does not require shrines; it does not need to be encased in a place of worship, and commenmorated in holy books. Faith

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in life will naturally express itself in living, and the forces of intelligence, creativity, activated in faith will give a new vitality to daily living.

The magnificence of faith has been dulled, diminished by the attempts of organized religion to harness faith and use it for exploiting the people, to keep the masses drugged into acceptance of their misery. The word faith has no brilliance in modern society; it's associated with superstitions, blind belief systems, exploitations of the masses.

Only a total revolution will release the word faith from its unfortunate connotations and make it available to socially-conscious inquirers. Faith is not of the conditioned dimension and any attempt to bring it into the conditioned realm of organized religions will necessarily be false.

Why should we be so concerned about faith; why should we try to revive the word faith? Social action requires the steadiness of a world perspective that recognizes the conditioned and the unconditioned. Human beings do not thrive, do not have a decent quality of life when they are limited to the conditioned realm. The ego-centered ness of the conditioned realm creates a situation in which the powerfully greedy become the 'have's' and try to extract everything they can out of 'have not's', and this situation is repeated over and over again.

What's needed is to uplift all of humanity to a higher level of perspective in which relatedness, oneness, harmony, orderliness are real and become values of daily living. Then a decent quality of living for all people is a possibility. Stuck in our narrow cubbyholes with the only perspective, the limited one of human conditionings spread by the media, with sanction given to greed, to becoming powerful, important persons with more resources at our command than we can ever use, without regard for how many people we have crushed, how much of the earth we have plundered to get the

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resources, with acceptance of national boundaries and violent defense of boundaries as a natural way of living, what future is there? We are clearly prescribing our own doom, by continuing with a narrow, fragmentary, conditioned view of living.

Faith is upliftment from the conditioned to awareness of the total. It does not require any belief at all, any participation in superstitions, ceremonies, any acceptance of idols. It is simply awareness that there is much more to life than the conditioned, the fragmentary.

As persons of faith, we don't lose our intellect, our commitment to humanity. We don't don special robes and disappear in the ether of Himalayan monasteries, spouting loving phrases about the divinity. We stay where we are, rooted like the giant redwood, and deal with the challenges of the day, the challenges of humanity, but our perspective of what life is, what a human is, has been transformed. There is much more vitality, vigor to our being, for awareness has released the unconditioned energies of creativity, cosmic intelligence.

Faith in life necessarily means faith in humanity. Each human being is essentially a wholeness of both conditioned and unconditioned energies, and as a wholeness is sacred. We may be sickened by the ugly behavior of which a human being is capable, we may refuse to cooperate with the insane actions of human-made society, but we need to be aware that each human being as a manifestation of the wholeness has the potential to mature into a person worthy of sacred trust.

As socially-conscious inquirers with faith in life and faith in humanity, we have energy, passion, commitment for the hard work of total revolution. Steadiness, stability comes with faith. Our roots in the wholeness penetrate more deeply and we have the robustness to withstand the failures, disappointments and to continue with the work.

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On the conditioned level, we are battered about by the emotional storms of failures and successes. High one day, in the depths of depression the next. We lose freshness, commitment, creativity when we are tossed about by emotional excesses. When dark clouds gather, we submit to the psychology of gloom and despair, and our work has a heaviness to it, becomes a burden. If we can see the light and the dark clouds in the same sweep of perception, there is a balance, a different perspective that makes us less vulnerable to despair, less caught up in the successes and failures of the moment.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL FOR TOTAL LIVING

If we are to be persons of faith, we must be aware that the totality includes light and dark, action and non-action, sound and silence. All are essential for whole living. Total growth is not possible if we are attached to some aspects of living and ignore others. Growth is unbalanced if we trust only light, action, and sound and are afraid of darkness, non-action, silence.

We know very well what action is, for each day of our lives is caught up in the race of activities that society demands. We play out our roles as family members, participants in the economic structures, citizens in the community at inhuman speed, rushing through meals and the necessities of daily living, and then racing to amusements, entertainments. We are perpetually exhausted and long to have time to ourselves, yet when there is a rare opportunity to be alone, we feel lonely, anxious, slightly depressed and find ourselves searching for an opportunity to become involved again. Even sleep is no respite because we are churning, brooding, restless during the night, for psychologically the day has not ended. We will not let it end mentally, and we carry over into the darkness the nervous activity of the day.

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Our lives go on in ceaseless superficial activities for the full span of human years, and as death inevitably approaches, we may feel we have rushed through life, we have never paused to go deeper, to feel at a profound level, to ponder about the meaning of it all, and we may feel that something important, the soul of life has been missed. As we approach death, perhaps we are filled with wounds that never healed, wounds that are still raw, open; we may have a taste of bitterness since life somehow didn't live up to the wondrous expectations we had in youth.

In the wholeness, there are healing forces, potential for living at the depth of the being, opportunity for communing with the soul of life. We rush past these opportunities in the race to become someone important, powerful in the eyes of society, to play out our roles as prescribed by others, aggressively denying that there is anything more to living. We miss these opportunities by superficially rebelling, rejecting societal demands, never going beyond vague discontent to deep questioning, to personal and social revolution.

Do we ever in the long years of our life pause to consider where we're going in this mad race we call living? Or have we at a young age simply joined the herd going somewhere and are content with the momentum, the feeling of belonging, without serious concern for where it's all leading?

If the yearning awakens in our hearts to live fully, to be mature, whole, to live at the depths of our beings, then we must leave the shores of the known, the conditioned madness, the pursuit of endless activity for the sake of activity, and plunge into the sea of silence.

EXPLORING THE REALM OF SILENCE

Silence, non-action has no sanction in society which considers inaction a waste of time, an expression of

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irresponsible laziness, an invitation to evils of all sorts. Society will not offer its rewards to the inquirer who wants to step out of the game, the race, to explore another dimension of consciousness. So it is not to please others, society, that we explore silence, but it is awareness that we are related to silence as essentially as we are related to sound.

We are guided from an early age to be responsive to sounds, to understand and manipulate sounds, but we have not been educated at all about silence. We have not been encouraged to discover that in silence, the worn-out nerves have an opportunity to relax fully, the brain moves to more rhythmic patterns, the breathing guiets, the emotions become calm. As active members of society we are continuously doing something to the world, leaving our mark, expending energy, but in silence we have the opportunity in openness to be filled, to be renewed.

When we are in silence, we leave behind the burdens that bend us under their crushing weight, we put aside broodings about the past, the endless replay of pleasurable and devastating experiences of the past, the nagging worries about the uncertainties of tomorrow. All the psychological, mental, physical maneuverings, come to a full stop. In silence we put aside all the images that identify us in society and are reborn, anonymous in wholeness.

If we are not educated to silence, we may wonder what to do. There is, of course, essentially nothing to do, but the body will be more comfortable if the spine is kept straight and the posture permits easy breathing. Obviously we must retire to a quiet place where for a period of time we can be civically dead; no one will interrupt, the telephone won't disturb.

In initial encounters with silence, we may be uncomfortable with not-doing. We may feel lonely, disturbed by thoughts that emerge, unsatisfied because thoughts,

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emotions do not stop moving, and the tendency will be to try to "do something" about any difficulties that arise. If we do something we will, of course, be back into the momentum of the ego structure with its motives, goals, standards, judgments. We may, after a few encounters with silence, judge ourselves harshly: "I haven't got the temperament for silence, my mind won't stop, I am an action person, maybe when I am older and have nothing to worry about, I'll try silence again."

We can be very cruel with ourselves and so prevent any learning. Initial learning involves uncertainties, perhaps a feeling of awkwardness and as adults with prestigious self-images, we may not like feeling uneasy, not quite the master of the situation. But silence is a dimension in which judgments have no meaning, have no significance at all. Silence is isness, and to be good at silence or poor at silence is utter nonsense.

Please do not confuse silence with concentration. There are techniques of concentration which help to quiet a mind that goes on chattering to itself, likes to keep itself in good company. There are techniques such as mantra, repeating a word or phrase, watching the breathing, looking at the flame of a candle, concentrating on parts of the body. These do help control the wanderings of the mind and might be used initially if we like, but it's very easy to make habits of these techniques and fill the opportunity for silence with the conditioned movements of concentration. Use of concentration may control the mind's wanderings, but concentration is not the motionless freedom of silence. Concentration involves a subtle movement toward an object; in silence there is no movement at all.

In loving kindness towards ourselves, our inquiry, we must allow time and create opportunity to be in total silence. When thoughts, emotions arise, we observe that they are there, but make no fuss, no movement toward them at all.

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We don't own the thoughts, don't take responsibility for their worth or lack of it. If thoughts, emotions are there, they are simply there, that's all. If we don't fuel, energize the wanderings of thought by creating an emotional fuss, getting all upset because "I" wanted to be in silence and now these silly thoughts are ruining "my" experience, the thoughts won't disturb, and with the motive for their movements no longer recognized, may stop moving altogether.

Let us not take out the measuring devices and announce to ourselves or others, "Yesterday I had good silence, hardly any thoughts; now today, it's a mess; what to do?" We must not compare ourselves to others. "Why does she go easily into silence and I don't? It's because of my family. They won't let me be in silence." Such behavior brings in the whole apparatus of society, the games, the comparisons, the rules and expects silence to fall in line. Silence is out of the game; it's sacred. Let us not pollute the sacred opportunity of silence with our careless maneuverings of the ego structures.

Being in silence is revolutionary if we respect its sacredness, but if we consider it another opportunity to continue with the same petty games of society, it will have no flame of revolution, no force to transform. it will be another experience, which might be mildly relaxing, but will not reach the depths of our being and revolutionize all of our life.

Some of us may wonder what happens to thoughts when they cease moving. Will the intellect atrophy in silence, become dull with lack of use? Once in silence will we ever emerge, once in motiveless awareness will we maintain our commitment to humanity? Silence is a natural dimension of living, not an escape. Silence and sound, action and non-action are like exhaling and inhaling.

We work in society, carry out our responsibilities, meet the challenges of living, of transforming society, and relax into non-action, silence where we have no identity, no roles

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to play, where we are stripped clean of all images, identifications either as male or female, as belonging to any nation, caste, class, as having any functional roles as parent, child, spouse; we are denuded of the ego structure and are merged in the wholeness. In wholeness, in the isness of communion, we belong to nothing and to all. The exclusive loyalties, attachments disappear and compassion for all beings is born in the heart.

In silence, the intellect is free to relax from incessant activity, and be revitalized, healed. In the endless replay of old mental tapes, the intellect is weary, dull; it is driven on and on by the pressure of the emotions to highly repetitive operation, not at all commensurate with its capabilities as a fine, sensitive instrument. The intellect tortured by the ceaseless petty movements, has little vitality, resiliency for the higher level thinking, decision making, problem solving that is its function in the organism.

Freed of any pressure at all in silence, the brain rests, moves to harmonious rhythms, and is restored to vitality, to meet the significant challenges that life brings every morning in abundance to our doorsteps; they are jewels these challenges that life brings, but if we are dull, grey people, we cannot appreciate their brilliance.

Living that moves easily from silence to action to silence is meditation. There are many unfortunate misunderstandings about meditation. Many associate it with a life of contemplation, retreat, of donning special costumes and being very remote from the cries of human misery. In true meditation, there is the presence of wholeness, the awareness of totality in every breath, every moment, every movement of relationship. Totality, wholeness, oneness is ever present in meditation. Even though we may work in many fields of human activity, be involved in relationships, meet the needs of daily living, the wholeness remains. All of

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living has the perfume of wholeness, the tender concern, the passion of commitment, the vitality of being fully alive.

Meditation is a new dimension of life and consciousness for which the human race is groping all over the world. Explorations that are going on in the various countries, in different ways are creating currents which converge on only one point: transcending the mental, the psychological structure. We are eager to grow, to leave behind the worn-out mind, so that the vast immensity that lies behind the visible and invisible is exposed to awareness. And perhaps the fusion of the individual psyche with that immensity and infinity of life, may bring about an exponential change in the human race.

Meditation gives the passion for total revolution. Living on the level of the intellect, the mind, we lack the scope, the vital energy to make total revolution possible. We waste too much energy on petty disputes, ugly concerns about power and possession. Meditation creates energy, vitality, is not limited in scope, is not damaged by petty motives.

UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF LOVE

Living in meditation compassion and love are facts, realities, not the romantic illusions or trivial hypocrises they have become for most of us. In meditation defenses of the ego structure melt, then compassion and love which are realities in the cosmos but usually ignored, flow causelessly, choicelessly, abundantly.

The purity of the essence of life, the unconditioned isness, radiates in love and compassion. The radiance of love and compassion is ever present but we obscure the brilliance with our gross insensitivity.

Unfortunately, we have commercialized love, made it an object of entertainment in innumerable varieties of themes, almost beyond repair. The sanctity of love, and of the beautiful

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mysteries of life cannot be marred, but the use of the word love in modern societies is often pathetic. There is energy in love and we exploit that energy by making love into currency, into an item of trade, buying security with love, bartering domination, agreement to be dominated, taking people into servitude in the name of love. And we reduce love to fulfillment of sensual pleasure, a petty, repetitive pleasure to soothe the sting of loneliness, insecurity, lack of deep fulfillment.

love is obviously not all that; it's what is possible when all this silly business comes to an end, when all the ego manipulations are transcended, when the artificial boundaries of defense structures are dismantled, when there is no more motive to get something out of love.

Love is complete relaxation in wholeness, in onenes. There is no desire, no motive to push and pull at another's life, to force a person into something he or she is not out of our own images.

love and faith are intricately intertwined. Without faith, relaxation will not be complete; there will always be the tension of not being at peace with the universe. And when there is tension, love does not flower. Tension results in subtle violence against oneself and against others.

Love is sharing the earth, the joys, the sorrows, the beauty, the ugliness, in easy communion without trying to manipulate others in any way at all. There is respect for, and faith in, the innate intelligence of others' lives.

This is not to say that we are indifferent, uncaring, that we are not responsive as parents, children, friends to the sincere needs of loved ones, but in being responsive, we don't dominate, bind the other person in a net of psychological attachments. We don't use the force of personality, charisma to bind others to us, to damage the freedom of another person in any way.

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Love is responsive, but is light, free, without hooks to ensnare. Beause it does not move from the ego, but is centerless, selfless, it doesn't have the motive to acquire sensual pleasure, to enhance self-image, to collect allies to be used in games of power.

The beauty, the mystery of love is that it isn't of the ego, isn't controlled by the conditionings, isn't simply a desire for sensual pleasure. Because it isn't conditioned, the touch of love, egoless love, heals our lives.

In the affluent countries, the emphasis on human-made structures and material goods, the homage that is given to mastery of the intellect, the depersonalization of the economic structures, the dependence on machines in almost all aspects of living has practically driven love out. Well-fed people are starved for affection, the milk of human kindness. And yet the developing countries, are racing to emulate the model of the west, to be dominated by science and technology, to collect a nauseating variety of consumer goods.

Love is essential if there is to be any quality to our lives individually and collectively. If we are not to be barbarians, plundering and looting one another, then love must flourish everywhere.

Love provides a new motivation for collective living, a new motivation for transforming socioeconomic, politcal structures and systems. The full potential of love for collective living, for revolution has not been realized. We have had the negative examples of violence, power, struggle, conflict. Isn't it time to unleash the positive light of love and let its warmth flood the land in healing radiance?

What is required is that as committed human beings, we have the fearlessness to set ourselves free of inner bondage, to go beyond the confines of the ego, and the motives of ego-centered living, to live in the wholeness of

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action and non-action, silence and sound, to open up to faith and the relaxation of love. If we hold on to bondage in any way at all, we are denying the freedom of love to ourselves and humanity.

We have moved very far away from love in our collective lives, dangerously near self-destruction, close to starvation. Perhaps we have the wisdom now, the awareness that love is as essential to human beings as the air we breath, the water we drink, the food we eat. Love is the beauty, the delicate mystery, the soul of life, the radiant unspoiled purity that brings spontaneous joy, songs of ecstasy, poems, paintings, dances, dramas to celebrate its indescribable, never to be fully captured bliss of being.

Can we bring love into the market places, into the homes, the schools, the places of business and transform them completely ? You may call it a Utopian challenge, but it is the only one that will make a significant difference, that is fully worthy of the potential of whole human beings.

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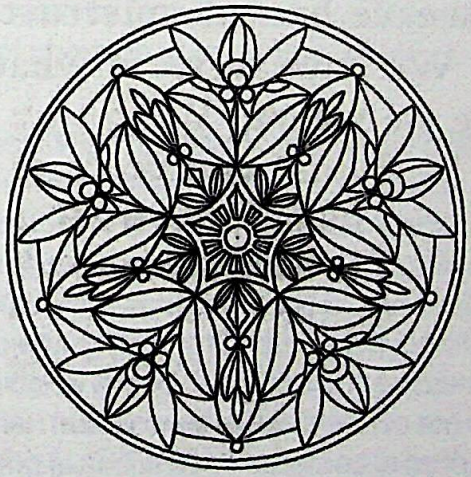
Part II

Trusting Wholeness



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We are the weavers of the fabric of modern society. We can weave love, truthfulness and peace or we can weave hatred, mistrust and war. We have to wear whatever fabric we weave.

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Releasing the Force of Truth

The invariable nature of wholeness when it manifests in life is order and truth. If it were not so, the natural world would tie chaotic, devoid of harmony, pernicious. Essentially life is true, in accord with reality, but we as human beings choose to twist the truth of existence into falsehood.

Truth is a practical, everyday matter of how we live with one another, how we express our understanding of what living is all about. Wholeness, truth is to be lived. The awareness of the wholeness, truth of life must radiate in every breath, gesture, movement of collective living if it is to remain alive and not degenerate into empty phrases.

Truth is not an abstraction to be stored in books, in the intellect, to be reserved for holy places on holy occasions; its natural place of abode is in every cell, every atom of every being.

Wholeness does not have fragments; truth does not have gradations, variations for different occasions. Truth does not change its colors to fit more comfortably social demands of various situations. Because truth is not conditioned, not of human civilization, not contaminated by the motives of the ego, it has the piercing light to cut through hypocrisy, illusion, sham and permits us to see the facts as they are with clarity, intelligence. When truth moves in our lives, we are clear about what decent living is and is not. Immersed in truth, we do not need to determine intellectually what peaceful living is, whether injustice, exploitation should be resisted; we know intuitively and we act.

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But today, we don't want truth to move in our lives. Just as we want to master all we survey, we try to manipulate truth, to push it into manmade fragments. We want one truth for family and close friends, another for the business, yet another for religion, and still another for politics. In a day we bring out a myriad of value structures, somewhat like a sorcerer with a bag of tricks, and we are surprised that these shifts in what is true, shifts in ways of being, leave us at the end of the day neurotic, confused, exhausted.

UNDERSTANDING THE URGENCY OF LIVING IN TRUTH

We cannot play such immature games with truth and expect to have any quality in our collective living. Truth is essential in all aspects of collective living, not as a religious belief, not as a conditioned moral compulsion, but as recognition that if we are not truthful with each other, we soon don't trust each other and mistrust leads to endless displays of defensive, aggressive behaviors. Lack of truthfulness easily degenerates into corruption which rots the fibre, the character of collective living, and breeds an ugly callousness in which everything can be bought and sold, everything can be had for a price. Nothing is sacred. Then what is left that makes life worth living?

As we have moved rapidly into more complicated ways of living, into much more depersonalized patterns of living, we have given sanction to being clever, manipulative, to distorting truth, taking advantage of situations for our personal gain, even if those exploited are poor, defenseless. We have become very 'ends' oriented and blind to the means.

Even social activists develop an ends orientation. A worthy cause, a good result for the people, justifies the means, whether the means involve killing, injuring, bribing, cheating, intimidating. It doesn't matter, for we can say that the situation

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was critical for the people and we did what we had to do. We don't think about what damage the killing, injuring, bribing, cheating, intimidating does to the human being who personally carries out these actions, what erosion occurs in the fibre, the character of that person. Intellectually the person may accept such actions as justified for the cause, but at deeper, more sensitive layers the being cannot swallow, digest these actions.

Wherever we turn in modern society, there are watertight compartments, each with an assigned value system, a designated truth. Even in social action, there are the exploited and the exploiters; one is a human being and the other is not. According to the agreed upon rules, the exploiter is to be hated with bitterness, treated with anger, violence, put out of humanity. Actions against the exploiter can be hideous, ugly, violent because he or she is not perceived as a human being but as an embodiment of evil.

Any means is acceptable to stop the exploitation in the name of the people. A quick end to exploitation justifies any long range damage it does to the foundation of collective living. We don't worry if the activists have as much blood on their hands as those who perpetrate injustice.

In our hearts we cling to the conditioned notion that ugly behavior on the part of another deserves ugly behavior in retaliation. We may be reasonable, rational human beings on an intellectual level, culturally we may be sophisticated, but scratch the surface in an intense moment and it is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Intellectually advanced, emotionally primitive, that is the state of the modern person.

Our self-images are so fragile, that the slightest attack brings a sharp retaliation either directly or indirectly. We are caught in this game of one bad turn deserves another, and we justify our behavior as essential for survival in society.

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We want out of this self-destructive mess, which threatens our lives, the future of our children, but we are loathe to give up the pleasure of anger and retaliation, even if we see clearly how easily personal confrontation escalates to national confrontation, fights with neighbors lead to fights with another country.

We want peace, but we are thrilled by retaliation. We want out of nuclear wars, but we want to be able to strike back either physically or verbally when anyone attacks our self-image, our ideas, our security. We feel we are likely to be crushed, to be seen as worthless, weak, fools, if we don't stand up for ourselves, make a show of power either in words, gestures or violent actions.

Yes, let us have peace but let us also have our petty retaliations, our small vendettas. Let us be high-minded as nations, non-violent, non-aggressive, non-expansionist, lovers of freedom, but let us be petty-minded in the neighborhoods, carrying on the antagonisms, acts of revenge, struggles of class against class, caste against caste, and keep alive the hatreds that have survived for hundreds of years.

If there is truth in this universe, and there is, it must be a truth for all peoples, all occasions, all times, not one truth for speeches, for favorable circumstances, and another when our petty egos have been attacked. As serious-minded people who care for the earth and the beings of the earth, we must see the necessity of transcending the hypocrisy of double, triple, quadruple value structures for collective living and discover whether there is a way of resisting exploitation, injustice without participating in sick games of retaliation, without giving in to primitive emotions. Is there a way of living in fearlessness without cooperating with injustice, without being crushed into passitivity by exploitation?

We must ask ourselves at the depths of our beings if there is a way to carry out revolution, total revolution, that

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doesn't require activists to emulate, model, the violent behavior of the oppressors in the act of revolution and to continue this behavior after coming to power. And we must investigate conscientiously whether there is a way of resisting oppression, injustice that does not violate fundamentals of collective living.

As serious-minded people, we will have to go into these issues very deeply. If we are true revolutionaries, spiritual inquirers, we do not have the luxury of being careless about any of the details of living, to engage in any behavior, action on the basis of blind acceptance of what is fashionable, whether it is violence or non-violence. We must come to a deep, personal understanding and live that understanding whether it is currently in mode, socially acceptable or not.

RECOGNIZING THE HYPOCRISY OF CURRENT VALUES

Truth and goodness are clearly out of fashion in modern life. We've replaced these outmoded values, ways of being, with cleverness, cunning, callousness. If we are truthful, good people, we're looked upon as being rather stupid, slow, dull-witted. We must be verbablly quick, ready with subtle attacks and defenses, on the alert to take advantage, socially and economically.

To be able to play the games of modern society well, we have to shift value structures quickly; move from one role to another in the drama without a pause, to adjust behavior adeptly with each new analysis of the situation.

Although we begin with values of family life that are similar, we soon learn that values are conditional. Wherever we may be, in whichever country, and whatever language we speak, we have been taught that family is a unit; here love, affection, and concern for one another is a value. To sacrifice for one another is a value we live by. If we find that there are

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certain faults, shortcomings, deficiencies in the members of our family, then we try to help these members. We see that they are not exposed, not unnecessarily punished. We help them to get rid of their faults, get rid of their weaknesses. And we encourage their good points. For homelife, there is a set of values: affection, care, concern, cooperation, sacrifice. These are the values that have kept families together.

At home, if we tell lies, our parents, brothers, sisters will scold and say, "Look you're telling lies and cheating even in the family; you're violent and aggressive in the family. How can you do that ?" But notice that as soon as we step out of the house, leave home on the way to the office, or to the factory, our values change. We have learned that now the values of cooperation, sacrifice, care, concern are no longer relevant.

Now we are members of a comparative, competitive, assertive, economic society. So we must become ambitious. We must grab at anything and everything we can get. We must compare, compete, assert, be aggressive, push others into the background, and acquire what we can. Now not sacrifice, but ambition, not cooperation but competition, not helping one another to get rid of weaknesses, but exploiting the weaknesses of others are dominant values. Now self-centeredness, ambition, aggressiveness, exploitation become admired economic values.

Outside of our homes, we are trained to believe we are members of the competitive, comparative society. We must compete against others, earn, acquire and possess more than the person round the corner. There is such a big rush, so much pushing and dashing to acquire more and more and more, owing and possessing more and more. It does not seem to matter if in that process we hurt our neighbors, tell lies, exploit others because profit is our motive, is the incentive of our labor.

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Society sanctions acquisition, possession, property. A man may be a loving brother, father, or a cooperative, helpful son at home, but away from home be a mercilessly rude and harsh person, in the name of economic competition.

If a boy is not assertive, if he is gentle, doesn't want to cheat, exploit others, even his parents will say, "What kind of boy is this? How can he live in the world?" If he cares for others, then they say, "He is going to starve." To become worldly-wise and worldly-clever, he must learn different values. He must learn that self-centeredness is a value. Grabbing by hook and crook or pushing aside his fellow human beings in a cruel or a callous way and rushing ahead are values. These values have the sanction of society today. It won't matter if others suffer, he must earn more and more.

It is not only in the realm of economics that self-centered values are approved. In politics, anger, hatred, violence are respectable and sanctioned values. In the name of the nation, in the name of religion, ideology, we can become ruthless to one another, we can hate, we can cultivate class hatred, war, and such behavior becomes holy. The anger, jealousy, aggressiveness, violence - all become sanctified in the name of country, religion, ideology, and we are respected. For being aggressive, for being hateful, for generating hatred among people, for provoking them to violence, we are respected.

Please do see how badly we are fragmented. Political life is different from economic life and economic life from family life. We have different bases for evaluating, different orders of priorities, different codes of conduct for ourselves. We go to a temple, church, or mosque and say, "Oh, God, You are almighty. You are omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. I surrender myself to you."

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We surrender ourselves in the temple and assert ourselves in offices and factories. We are loving and cooperative at home and violent and dishonest in politics. Giving our loyalties to these mutually incompatible codes of conduct, we inevitably become divided within ourselves. All of us, more or less, are schizophrenic. Is it surprising that at the end of a day we come home totally exhausted?

When we owe loyalty to incompatible sets of values, talk of love at home, talk of surrender in the temple, and become aggressive and rush after money or power in economics or politics, we become hypocrites. Today, we are nations of hypocrites and cowards.

These divisions, splits, fragmentations have created a world in which countries and their governments talk about world peace, international brotherhood and engage in arms races, and a world in which there is neither truth nor trust. Our plight is an ironically sorry one, for advances in science and technology have brought us closer together; trade, commerce, exchange of populations have in many ways united us, but we are divided by mistrust.

We are more than ever afraid because we can't trust one another. The global human family suffers today from a deadly affliction of mistrust from which only the healing force of a holistic approach can save us. If life is one, if life is indivisible, non-fragmentable, there cannot be different values, different sets of values and separate codes of conduct for various fields of action. Please do look at this very carefully.

BALANCING MALE AND FEMALE QUALITIES

Oneness, wholeness of life means that male and female qualities are balanced, each is respected. In our world, assertiveness is a respected masculine value and assertiveness leading to aggressiveness is also respected,

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looked upon with great awe. This assertiveness and aggressiveness, which inevitably culminates in psychological and physical violence, has to be balanced with the feminine values of non-aggressiveness and love.

Men and women have to live together, work together, point out one another's weakness, help one another to eliminate these weaknesses, put their intellectual, intuitive, emotional resources together. But women cannot be self-conscious, inhibited about the strength they contain. If women realize that the essence of motherhood is contained in them, whether they are ever married, have children or not, the awareness gives the power of fearlessness and the power of love. If women realize that the world is starving for real love, real affection, real trust, a sense of responsibility, and service, if women can go out in the society contributing the essence of motherhood, then we will heal many a scar from which our minds are suffering.

Women have to be made aware of their inner strength, resources. We are suffering from too much assertion, too much aggression. Assertion and ambition lead to aggression, and then to physical violence. Assertion is the beginning of violence. We need to balance assertion with sacrifice, service and love. We are imbalanced and lopsided. The balance has to be created by the acceptance of the female qualities.

If we are to save ourselves, we will have to see through this game of fragmentation and observe firsthand, discover the values of collective living that will bring peace everywhere. We will have to see that peace is not something that will be acquired, brought into creation by non-peaceful means, by people who have no peace inwardly but who suffer from the internalized conflicts of society. And we will have to see how intimately inner disorder, hypocrisy in society, clashes among nations are related to one another.

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We desperately need truth, understanding that holds for all of living, personal, collective, international. This truth must be lived in all spheres, in wholeness. If all life is one, we cannot love our friends, hate our enemies, kill people who disagree with us, exploit creatures and the earth for economic purposes.

Once we have become aware in freedom that wholeness exists, that there is something real beyond the fragmentary, that love and intelligence are essential forces in life, then we will see the falseness of cooperating with conflicting value structures, with responding according to one understanding in personal life and according to another in economic or political life.

Understanding, awareness, faith, love have vitality, vigor, energy and are not to be kept stifled in the intellect, closed in monasteries, in isolated lives. They move us with a force that must be expressed. The force of wholeness, the energy of love will not recognize the artificial divisions of life, will accept no limitations at all, but will flood the consciousness, the total being with tremendous energy.

It's no use for any of us to hold on to compartments, to say, "Yes, let us have truth but here in this corner of my psyche, I will have my ego-centered life, my emotional imbalances, my indulgences in sensual pleasures my ambitions, my possessions; yes, wholeness can pervade the rest, but just leave me a corner where I can be angry, competitive, ambitious, callous so I can survive."

BECOMING FREE OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Even though we are serious people, comnitted to deep investigation of living, we don't want to give up our dual value systems; we don't want to be completely denuded of anger, bitterness, personal ambition to be someone, even if we are great social activists or spiritual inquirers.

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Why do we hold on to anger? Why do we associate being human with getting angry?

We are living in the midst of violence, we are living in an era of individual and collective aggression and exploitation in the realm of economic life as well as political. And when specific events take place internationally, they are explosions of pent-up anger and violence contained in us.

If you say, "How can you be human and not get angry," I ask myself, angry against whom? Against what? And where will your anger lead? We have to ask ourselves whether the present civilization, and the lifestyle we have developed, is not responsible for explosions of anger, hatred, violence. Then why not deal with the fundamental lifestyles, life values, the priorities that we have, the value system that we have?

We must ask ourselves what anger will accomplish? We are angry because people in one country have been killed. And then we find out that these people have been killing others in a neighboring country; the neighboring country is retaliating. Each country has a set of explanations putting blame on the other that may go back for centuries. There is no end to it. It seems rather childish to indulge in anger, for it is impotent, cannot bring about any action that will lead us individually or collectively away from violence.

When we are angry, we lose our balance; anger excites our nerves; no balanced, sane or logical action is possible when anger haunts us, when the fever of anger catches us. Perception becomes distorted, and our reactions unbalanced.

Please recognize that anger is an abnormality not a natural ingredient of human life. Love, for example, is natural. It's the very nature of life, as well as the essence of human beings. Whenever we are visited by love, there is no discomfort. There may be intensity; there may be a

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new depth to life, new energy. When anger or jealousy or greed or hostility or violence visit us, we become uncomfortable. We would like to be rid of this feeling. This reaction indicates, does it not, that anger is a foreign element in human nature.

Anger has been utilized by society for many purposes and it is sanctioned. We can get angry in the name of religion, of defending religion, we can get angry in the name of our country, in the name of our ideology. Anger has been used as a motivator. If human beings would like to live together, such motives causing intense imbalances and irrational behavior must be seen as exceptionally dangerous, our psyches have to be purged of them.

We can be fully human only when we do not give in to the sickly habit of getting angry or irritated. Sorrow is a different thing. When we encounter injustices, exploitation, the horror of wars, the suffering of people sorrow visits the heart. It's not the ego-centered suffering that anger causes. Sorrow joins us with the totality of life, with the totality of the human race. Sorrow stimulates compassion.

When sorrow moves us deeply, we need to turn inward and try to fathom the psychic depths, to eliminate the seeds of violence from our psyches. That is one significant way of dealing constructively with the problems that confront us on a gigantic scale. A second way is to reach out to those who are committing the crime of aggression and protest effectively with all the moral force at our command, bringing persuasive moral pressure to bear.

Mahatma Gandhi, the master of moral suasion who led the political fight for independence in India, who taught us the way of dignified fearless resistance, used to say that one can be fearless only when there is no hatred in the heart. "If I get angry," he said, "if I hate the persons who oppress or torture me, then the hatred, the anger stimulates violence. I

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lose inner balance and I begin to use the same tactics that the oppressor or the torturer uses." Revolutionize the motivations, he used to say, for social, for economic, for political, for cultural, for religious changes, revolutionize the motivations. Replace hatred and anger with fearlessness and the dignity of decency.

The world today is facing this challenge of replacing the traditional motivations. Anger and hatred stimulate the tendency to be cruel, to be harsh. We have to be watchful and go beyond that tendency, but resist the evil all the same.

It seems to me that cowardice creates an opportunity for those who suffer from cruelty in their hearts to exercise that cruelty, to yield to the temptation to oppress and torture others. Wherever there are oppressors and torturers, there must be a majority of people who suffer from individual or collective fearfulness or cowardice.

In order to cope with oppression or torture, we have to stand up fearlessly and resist the tortures and oppression peacefully, decently and in a humane way. Resistance is a kind of relationship. Not to give in, not to succumb, not to surrender, to stand up for freedom, to fight for freedom is a way of relating ourselves to the fact of oppression.

If we bend our knees or bow our heads to those who oppress, those who suffer from the mental sickness of wanting to oppress and to torture, then we are being unfair to ourselves and unfair to life. Decent and fearless resistance to oppression is the only honorable and dignified way, even if that means we may have to lay down our lives.

Let us recognize the dangers, the limitations of anger as a motive for resisting oppression, but let us not become cowards. Security, pleasure-mindedness make us cowards. Once we become pleasure-minded and convenience-minded, we lose our sense of responsibility, we lose our

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sense of dignity and self-respect. It is not only political power that corrupts. Money corrupts and material or physical pleasure and physical comfort also corrupt.

We may have, and certainly let us have, money, pleasure, comfort, everything in decent amounts, but nothing at the cost of truthfulness, nothing at the cost of self-respect, nothing at the cost of the social instinct of helping others.

Are we willing to non-cooperate with this cult of pleasure, comfort and luxury that the societies, the governments offer? We must be aware that organized pleasure reduces us to passivity, capable only of receiving things ready-made. We must notice that we lose energy and creativity, our lives become empty, psychological inertia develops and is intensified when we receive everything readymade. Consumer goods, capital goods, social security, insurance, even leisure activities are organized; entertainment is organized, and what is an individual today in the advanced, affluent countries? Do we see that the pursuit of pleasure and comfort has done to the quality of consciousness, the quality of life?

RELEASING UNDESIRABLE ATTACHMENTS

When we are provided luxury, pleasure, comfort and organized entertainment and pleasures, we become a society of mediocre people and that is what we are in every country of the world. People who become obsessed with security, with pleasure and comfort, never exercise their intelligence and don't make an effort to think independently.

We must investigate seriously everything that prevents us from living in freedom, in truth, in wholeness, in fearlessness. We may be attached to anger or to physical comforts, or it may be that we have ego attachments, that we feel we are very important activists, inquirers doing terribly important work.

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If we become puffed up with self-importance because we are helping others or setting ourselves free of conditionings, we need to question what is this 'I' that's becoming so inflated, where is the 'me' and the 'not me' in wholeness, in oneness. And it may be useful if we discuss our shortcomings, our attachments with our colleagues. Sometimes it takes the air out of an inflated ego to share in an easy, non-judgmental way, the difficulties of ego attachment, of giving too much importance to the self.

And, similarly, if we have attachment to anger, abusive behavior either physical or verbal, it's sometimes helpful to talk about this behavior with others, again without judgment. If eruptions of anger occur and we hurt others, let us sincerely, humbly apologize. The ego, of course, hates to apologize, to admit weakness; the vanity of the ego will be pricked. An apology undermines the dominance of the ego and lessens its hold on our lives.

We will have to help each other live in truth, freedom, wholeness, in gentle constructive ways. The truth can be used in an aggressive way to undermine the confidence of another person. We can say or do very harmful things to another person in the name of truth, but this behavior is motivated by sick egos that want to damage and look respectable at the same time.

Let us not use truth to disguise our violence toward each other. Truth is motiveless; it has no need, urge to harm. Let us in sensitive, tender ways support each other to live in truth. We can listen, share our understanding, encourage each other, in times of distress, discuss openly, nonjudgmentally our weaknesses, shortcomings.

Those of us who have difficulties with anger, temper, ego attachment or who are pleasure, security minded, might become involved in physical, manual labor. It helps bring

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balance to high-strung people who have moved too far into the abstractions of life and away from the earth. Working with the earth brings us into direct perception with wholeness, the interrelationship of all beings; it encourages us to be responsive to the real and not to the abstract workings of the intellect, the ego.

There is a sanctity to manual labor, but we of the cities give priority to intellectual activity and shun physical, manual labor as primitive. We sell our intellects on the economic markets and buy labor-saving devices so that we're involved in physical labor as little as possible. But with excessive priority given to the intellectual we lose our balance, we become easily uprooted and drift away from our organic relationship to the earth, the creatures of the earth.

In our high-rise buildings in the city, how can we live an organic relationship to the earth, to fellow beings? In artificial structures with even the air, the temperature, the light regulated by machines, how can we live in attunement with the rhythms of nature?

Uprooted from the earth, living on the level of the intellect and the ego, it's easy for sensitive people to become irritable, angry, given to tempers. Driven by intellect out of our natural environments, we can hardly relax and feel harmonious with our environments.

City life does create pressure to live at a pace not suitable to the human nervous system, to engage in harsh, callous behaviors, to live in a way that may be intellectually amusing, but damaging, destructive to the body, the nervous system.

LEARNING THE ELEGANCE OF SIMPLICITY

If living the truth is difficult for us, even after we have understood the vital importance for ourselves and for humanity as a whole to live in truth, not according to a patched together

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set of incompatible value structures unworthy of human beings, then perhaps we need to voluntarily simplify our lives, to move to natural settings and engage in physical, manual labor. If we find we cannot live the truth fully in complicated societies, then our choice is not to compromise the truth - we have tried that and failed - but to voluntarily change our lifestyles, to live simple lives and become engaged at least for a part of the day in physical labor.

It is no use adopting an alternative lifestyle because it is fashionable; we will carry our conditionings, our fragmentation, our incompatible value structures wherever we go. We will pollute even the most beautiful, natural setting with the stench of our ego manipulations if we haven't personally discovered the truth of decent living. We have made marvelous attempts to live together in the beauty of communes in gorgeous settings, but the ego corrupted in society will not stop its play simply because intellectually we've decided to live cooperatively, in harmony with one another and nature.

But if we come to alternative lifestyles through insight, personal discovery of the destructiveness of the lives we are dragging ourselves through in the cities, then we are prepared for voluntary simplicity. If we have gone through the hard work of setting ourselves free of societal conditionings, then living in simplicity has some meaning. Simplicity then is not primitive, but is awareness that whole beings thrive best with their roots in wholeness and not in artificial structures where daily these roots are cut to pieces in the interest of social, economic, political gains.

Living in truth, wholeness, rather than in fragments, in mutually exclusive compartments where different priorities, value structures hold us in the grip of socially approved authorities, will put us out of the race for the prestige, power, material gains that society can confer. Yet there is a

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tremendous joy in living in truth. There is a marvelous fragrance, fresh flow of pure air that is released when hypocrisy is cast aside and truth invited into our lives. It is as if we breathe for the first time. And in the purity, we regain our self-respect and the dignity of all humanity.

We know that we live shabby lives, don't we? We don't require a complicated analysis to come to that conclusion. We know that we are petty little hypocrites, living on the level of the ego, dancing to society's tune.

When we step out of the stupid games of tailoring truth to fit the situation, as is totally accepted in politics, we regain our sense of what it is to be a human being, of what it is to be a truthful, whole human being who cannot be bought or sold, who will not become an economic commodity. And in the fearlessness of incorruptibility that truth inspires, we know what it is to be a decent human being, who lives a decent life and leaves a decent heritage to the young.

It is the fearless lovers of truth, and that can be any and all of us, who will lead humanity to total revolution. And whatever actions we take in total revolution will have the perfume of truth; we won't give in to ugly solutions, to the quick and dirty in order to achieve a peaceful end for society. We've tried that and we have had to suffer through hard times because in the past we've given sanction to "anything goes" in revolution; we were genuinely surpised that the fighters for freedom became the new exploiters of the people in an equally hideous power structure.

We've tried to decimate truth, to quell its revolutionary force, but those of us who are not afraid of truth, who do not destroy truth in the name of progress or economic, political sophistication, will lead a new revolution based on awareness of the oneness of all beings, based on faith in the potential of love to move the hearts, transform the being of all creatures who exist on this beautiful earth.

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Learning from Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is for most of humankind not merely a passing historical figure, but a shining symbol of hope a radiant symbol of our potential to transform ourselves and our society totally, of our potential to dwell together on our earth in peace and harmony. His life is pervasive evidence that each of us has the potential to grow in spirit through fearless service to our fellows, the potential to live in wholeness.

The revolution that was his life has touched us all, Because of Gandhi, the quality of our minds, our cultures, our very social behavior has been enhanced. His appearance on the world stage altered radically our view of life, our concept of what is possible for human beings. His eloquent *jeevan darshan,* philosophy of life gives us fresh views of every aspect of living -biological and psychological, political and economic, individual and social.

Through the unrelenting force of love, truth, and non-violence, Gandhi revitalized the discarded and neglected in society. He placed once again the human being - long displaced by machines, by military and political systems - in the center of things, at the apex of society, and embued human beings and human labor with new dignity.

DISCOVERING THE STRENGTH OF GANDHI

Gandhi achieved greatness, accomplished the seemingly impossible because in every aspect of his life he merged faith in the divine with faith in the human being. For Gandhi divinity was not restricted to temples, churches, or mosques, but was universal, all pervasive "God is my truth," he said, "and truth is my God." He was profoundly aware that

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beyond the societies that the human mind has invented lies a vast universe not created by humans. The universe, the oneness, wholeness, is intelligent beyond human intellect, creative beyond human inventiveness, loving beyond human conception.

The ultimate reality, for Gandhi is truth. It is truth alone, he said, that is eternal, everything else is momentary.

Truth is the sovereign principle in Gandhi's life. This truth, on which he based his life, is not only truthfulness in word and thought, the relative truth of our minds, but is the absolute truth, the eternal principle that pervades all and sustains all.

Gandhi observed that while everything around him was ever-changing, ever-dying there is underlying all a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. It was the living consciousness of truth that was the source of Gandhi's faith. "Truth is my strength," he said often, "truth is my strategy and truth is my defense."

Gandhi's faith was not only in truth, in the divine. He also had profound faith in the potential of humanity, and he insisted that faith in the divine must be expressed as faith in humanity. He looked at the human being as a reservoir of divine powers, full of potentialities. He did not accept the apparent limitations of the human being, for he felt that infinite powers are contained in each person, that each human being in his or her heart loved truth, wanted love, needed care and compassion. He was above all confident that there was a yearning in the human heart for harmony, cooperation, peace.

Gandhi's faith in the divine and his love for humanity were the sources of his inner strength, inner dynamism. In the dark days of difficulties and failures (he had his share of

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failures, including one he called a Himalayan blunder) his faith in divinity, in humanity did not flicker. This faith expressed itself in service to his country, in service to humanity, for he loved human beings with all their cruelties, weaknessess, shortcomings. And he put his love in action.

It was on the basis of his faith in truth and love as eternal and powerful forces in the universe, and forever present in the heart of every human being that Gandhi set out to free India from British rule. He aimed not only at political independence but at the total transformation of society through a new dynamic of revolution based on love and non-violence.

To those without Gandhi's abiding faith in love as an eternal principle the notion of a revolution, of a fight for freedom against the most powerful nation on earth, based on love and non-violence as its chief weapon was thoroughly preposterous. But Gandhi proved extraordinarily convincing and the great experiment was launched.

TRACING THE PATH OF REVOLUTION

Gandhi was educated as a barrister in England. After completing his legal training, he returned to India to practice law, but met with little success, partially because he was so shy that to speak in court was almost impossible for him. When he was offered a clerical job in South Africa, he readily accepted even though the job did not seem to be suitable for a lawyer.

In South Africa, he soon learned that his primary role was not going to be either as clerk or lawyer in his firm, but as leader of the struggle of Indians in South Africa to resist unjust treatment by the British authorities. Carrying out this role required Gandhi to move to deeper levels, to explore the profound meaning of living.

The bitter reality of Indian life in South Africa in the late nineteenth century came home to Gandhi almost at once. A

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week after his arrival in Durban, he was required to make a trip to Pretoria the capital of the Transvaal, on business related to a lawsuit in which his employer was involved. A first-class seat had been booked for him on the train and he began his journey without incident. But when the train reached Maritzburg, capital of Natal, at about nine o'clock in the evening, another passenger objected to having a 'colored' person in the first-class compartment. When Gandhi insisted on his rights as a holder of a first-class ticket and refused to move, a constable was summoned and Gandhi was pushed out of the compartment. Since Gandhi refused to go to the van compartment, he was left standing on the platform as the train moved on.

In a bitterly cold, dark waiting room, with no overcoat, he shivered through the night, asking himself what to do. Should he swallow the insult, he asked himself, finish his work and go back to India, or should he stay and fight for his rights? He decided that to run back to India would be cowardice. The insult, the hardship which he had endured was only a symptom of the deep disease of prejudice. He would respond not to the personal insult, but the disease of color prejudice.

To take on a leadership role in the Indian community of South Africa required, Gandhi felt, that he change his lifestyle drastically. He turned his back on personal profit and prestige, simplified his life to avoid unnecessary personal expense, and eventually abandoned a European standard of living. He began, too, to question very seriously his own religous beliefs.

Some friends enthusiastically prayed for his conversion to Christianity. But he saw no meaning in converting from Hinduism to Christianity. He was, in fact, delving for deeper truths than even the organized religions offered, for at this point faith in the sacredness of each human being and love

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for humanity were emerging as guiding forces in Gandhi's spirituality and social action.

Accompanying the emergence of this faith and love was his deep conviction about violence. He had been exposed in England to thinkers who were philosophically, ethically opposed to violence and he had read deeply the works of these and other thinkers who saw the futility of violence.

In South Africa he witnessed firsthand the shattering violence of the Zulu uprising and saw for himself the futility of using violence to solve social problems. This experience, in combination with his reading and his faith in the sacredness of all beings, aroused in Gandhi a deep personal abhorrence of violence and convinced him that he would never lead the Indian community in South Africa into violent confrontaton with British authorities.

While Gandhi felt strongly that violent confrontation was futile, he had not fully developed an alternative approach. The challenge to create a new movement came at a meeting of the South African Indian community in Johannesburg in September 1906. The meeting had been called to determine how the Indians should respond to an oppressive ordinance passed by the government of the Transvaal a month earlier. This ordinance, popularly called the 'Black Act', required all Indians to register with the government and to carry on their persons at all times a certificate of registration.

When Gandhi rose to speak to the representatives of the Indian community at the meeting, he had neither a plan nor a program in mind. He explained the ordinance and the implications of the ordinance to the Indian community in South Africa. Then somewhat to Gandhi's surprise, one of the leaders took a pledge with God as witness never to yield in cowardly submission to such degrading legislation. Gandhi took care to explain all the possible consequences of civil disobedience, but delegates were willing to endure the

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consequences of civil disobedience and pledged to resist injustice.

At that moment a new movement was born. This movement, initially called passive resistance, later became *Satyagraha*, a force born of truth and love.

Satyagraha for Gandhi meant insistence on truth. This insistence, as Gandhi showed for eight years in South Africa, creates *a* force which when applied in the right spirit has enormous power. To ensure proper application of this force, Gandhi asked the Indians in South Africa who became *satyagrahis* to never harbor hatred of their opponents in their hearts, to never retaliate physically, to never insult the opponent, and to be prepared to suffer to the end for the cause.

This apparently highly improbable method of love and non-violence, which placed seemingly impossible demands on the participants, was surprisingly successful in persuading the British authorities in South Africa to repeal the most repugnant and damaging laws affecting the Indian community. In the process, Gandhi not only proved the possibilities of insistence on truth, educated the community in resisting injustice, but also managed to win the respect of some of his chief opponents.

FOLLOWING THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

When Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he felt that after so many years in South Africa he was out of touch with his own land and people. His political mentors advised him to spend a year traveling and studying the conditions of the people.

He soon saw that while the Indian people feared their British rulers, they also admired and envied them. Those Indians educated in the by now well-established educational system of lord McCauley had acquired the English mentality

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and adopted the English language. Such Indians despised their culture, just as the British did, and at the same time were charmed and fascinated by the culture of the English.

Other Indians, particuarly villagers who were the majority of the population, were greatly impoverished. The villages, once the backbone of the Indian culture and economy, had been neglected as cities grew. Those Indians who migrated to the cities lost respect for villages, for farmers, for the very roots of Indian life. And while most Indians in the cities were oppressed and exploited by the English, they still wanted to follow a western style of living.

For Gandhi, India was a land of six-hundred thousand villages. For him independence was the political and economic independence of these villages. But for the urban, educated Indians independence was self-rule and industrialization, which, based on the British pattern, would lead to material prosperity.

Gandhi plunged into the struggle for independence but refused to separate the struggle for self-rule from transformation of the villages that would lay the foundation of a new India. As early as 1916, he introduced his revolutionary economic program which focused on the *charkha* (the hand-spinning wheel), on reforms in agriculture, and on the handspun cloth industry with the aim of making the villages self-sufficient in food, clothing, and shelter.

He did not suggest that his socioeconomic revolution would raise the standard of living to that enjoyed by some urban dwellers in India or to that of European countries. He did insist that the standard of living in the villages should provide the necessities for all people, should enable them to live with dignity and love. As part of the means for achieving this standard, he recommended the elimination of most large-scale industries and the development of small-scale cottage and village industries.

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He saw that his colleagues in the Congress party were eager to establish centralized economic planning and large-scale industries that would enable India to compete with the industrialized nations of the West, to be progressive as these nations are progressive. But Gandhi's concern was for the welfare of the people in India's villages and not for any foreign notion of progress. He was not willing to help wrest power from Great Britain only to have his colleagues continue to carry out English policies.

He encouraged those who gathered around him, as more and more people did, to go to the villages to work to improve conditions there. He wanted the villages made truly livable places once again and felt this could best be attained by promoting self-reliance among villagers.

If independence when it came, did not offer villagers the freedom to lead decent, self-reliant lives, it would be meaningless. Hence, Gandhi's strategy for liberating India was a comprehensive program that provided for strengthening the villages, uplifting the moral character of all Indians, striking at the roots of social problems such as untouchability, communal conflicts, inferior status of women, and preparing the people for civic responsibility in a democracy.

Gandhi insisted that this comprehensive program be carried out together with purely political programs for achieving independence and would not agree to sacrifice his constructive programs in order to speed the process of independence. India had to be ready for independence, he said, ready to earn independence through development of the strength and moral character to live decently as free human beings, as citizens of a democracy.

The fight for freedom was to be conducted with the same moral values of truthfulness, fearlessness, compassion,

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willingness to fight injustice that would turn freedom fighters into worthy leaders of a new nation.

Satyagraha, the movement of non-violence, truth and love which had its birth in the small-scale activities against political and social injustice in South Africa was now to be tested in a national movement for independence. Gandhi wanted non-violence and love, which he saw as natural laws, to be the foundation of an independence movement and of a new society that would emerge from independence.

Non-violence and love, Gandhi pointed out frequently, are the greatest forces at the disposal of humanity, far mightier than the mightiest weapons of destruction devised by the ingenuity of men. Violence, he would add, had only a temporary effect, but the evil it leads to is permanent. Every murder or injury, no matter in what cause is, Gandhi said, a crime against humanity.

It made sense to Gandhi that the immorality of oppression should be met with a moral force. He was convinced that moral or soul force would convert the opponent, while physical, military force would only coerce the opponent temporally, causing more bitterness and endless difficulties in living together in harmony.

Meeting the opponent with love, truth, purity, fearlessness, compassion, Gandhi felt, would awaken the heart of the opponent. Meeting the opponent with physical brutality, on the other hand, would only enhance the brute force of all involved. Depending on the forces of love and truth required absolute conviction that the divinity resides in every human being, no matter how wicked the behavior of the person, and that with the right persuasion, the person would awaken to love and compassion.

Only people of strong moral character, committed to the values of truthfulness, fearlessness, compassion, he realized could both win a fight for freedom and be worthy

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leaders of a new nation. Only those people could successfully wield the powerful weapon of *satyagraha*. He encouraged his followers to become *satyagrahis* not only to help secure independence for India but also to learn the law of non-violence, the law of love that he hoped would be the foundation of the society that would arise after independence was achieved.

Gandhi wanted to make absolutely clear that *satyagraha* was not avoidance, passivity, vagueness, but is a clear, active, strategy for peace which requires the highest levels of truthfulness, fearlessness, and love on the part of the *satyagrahi*. By developing satyagrahis for the fight against British rule, he was strengthening the soul force of a nation.

The freedom movement powered by love and truth suffered many setbacks, called for enormous sacrifices, endured many inner conflicts, but eventually was the force that impelled the peaceable departure of the British. It was not an entirely sweet success, however, for the day of independence saw the partition of India. For Gandhi who loved the wholeness of the land of India, it was as if his heart had been torn.

REDISCOVERING GANDHI

Why are young people now turning to Gandhi, rediscovering him, trying to understand him, though their elders even in India all to often have not understood, appreciated him?

There are, of course, many reasons why young people as well as many not so young find Gandhi relevant to their lives. Certainly one powerful reason is Gandhi's dedication to truth and non-violence. In a world rife with suspicion, doubt, violence, and rancor, Gandhi's love of truth, his total commitment to truth, non-violence,

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peacefulness - as well as his success in applying these forces for good - have immediate relevance for individuals and for society today.

When Gandhi says that truth and non-violence should be woven into the fabric of social life, he's touching something very fundamental: truthfulness, not as a moral virtue, but truthfulness as the foundation of human relationships.

We can't trust one another today in social life, can we? We are not truthful. Our motivations often differ from our utterances; our actions often contradict what we say. Not only is there a gap, there is a contradiction between speech and action. Gandhi wanted to bridge this gap, eliminate this contradiction. He said if we want a non-violent society, if we want a peaceful society, we will have to have a new dynamics of relationship. He asked that we stop deceiving one another, that we stop cheating one another, that we behave with one another in ways that will promote mutual confidence and trust.

Who trusts whom today? Is there trust among producers, consumers, businessmen, middlemen, industrialists? Each community is working for itself as if our interests were different.

When Gandhi talks about truth and non-violence, he's trying to teach humanity that our interests, fundamentally, are not in conflict. We have created classes, and a class society, and then we create class consciousness, then class conflict, and then we want to eliminate the classes through that conflict. Gandhi pointed out another means of resolving class consciousness: non-violence. The importance of non-violence, as a basic value for social life, has been lost today along with the loss of the sense of values; much of the misery and suffering existing in society, and particularly in Indian social life, is due to the loss of moral values. Certainly there is a crisis in morality, an ethical crisis in India today.

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Without advising us to go to churches and temples, or to the mountains, Gandhi said, "Be where you are. But put at stake everything for the sake of truthfulness." He taught us a new way of living: peace as a way of living, peace as a way of life.

Peace is not an attribute of the mind. Non-violence is not something that is physical, mental, verbal only. It's a total way of living. We talk about democracy, we think that we love democracy, and we say we want to preserve democracy. If democracy is to survive in countries such as India, we will have to learn Gandhi's dynamics of relationship, in which I trust you and you trust me. But today we have no trust. We buy and sell votes. We buy and sell everything. Even human life is a salable commodity.

Gandhian dynamics of relationship refer to truth and trust, to decency and peacefulness. "Trust every human being," he said; "trust even those who call themselves your opponents because the divine is concealed in every human heart." And he asked that we appeal to, bring out the goodness in each human heart. Thus faith in the goodness of man, in the power of truth, is the fundamental point of Gandhi's dynamics of human relationship.

A second reason that people are finding Gandhi's programs of social action relevant to their lives is that he was a man of faith. All of his ideas, his teachings, have a spiritual base. In times of anxiety and despair, of spiritual aridity, Gandhi's faith in the divine and in humanity is a beacon in the darkness.

Gandhi always referred to the whole universe as divine, including the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the stars, and all space. Engrossed in our daily problems, confronted with many challenges, we are hardly aware there is a world beyond the societies that we have created, beyond the social, economic, political structures. But there is a vast universe

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which is not our creation. Faith in the divine means realization that beyond the structures of society that we have created, beyond the concepts, knowledge, experience, a vast universe exists not created by us, not run by us. An intricate universe exists where the cycle of seasons follows by itself.

Gandhi was a person of faith. He would say, "Let me do whatever I feel is right and let me leave the rest in the hands of the divine." Faith in the divine was the breath, the vital breath of his life.

In the morning he would pray. At 4:30 in the morning, at 5:30 in the evening, he would be at prayers. These prayers were not a ritual. It was not a mechanical thing. It was not good manners or etiquette. It was the source of inner strength and power.

Faith in the divine, Gandhi realized, must express itself through the faith in humankind. Gandhi looked at each person as a reservoir of divine powers, as full of potentialities. He never accepted humans as limited, but saw the infinite power contained in human beings. He had faith that humans in their own hearts loved truth, wanted love, required peace and non-violence.

Gandhi had tremendous faith in human beings. He would go to the house of barrister Jinnah, the leader of the Muslims, to meet him, to argue with him. If Jinnah would not go to Gandhi, Gandhi would go to Jinnah. Gandhi's followers had big egos. Gandhi had none. He said for the service of the country, for the service of man, "If I have to walk to the end of the globe, I will do it. If I have to reduce myself to a speck of dust, I will do it in the service of man; that is, in the service of God." The service of country came later, but he loved humankind with all its cruelties, loved human beings as they are, full of weaknesses, shortcomings.

If you read the history of the Boer War in the South Africa, and of the *Satyagraha* in South Africa, you will see

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clearly his love for those African Indians, see how he served them. He did not feel ashamed to wash the soiled clothes of women workers in South Africa. He never felt ashamed to nurse them back to health.

Gandhi was that rare individual in India who has faith both in God and in humanity. Those who have faith in God say this world is an illusion. They turn away from society, from social problems and they seek their own liberation or whatever they call it away from man, away from his problems. Therefore, religion has no dynamism in India today. The dynamisms, the living force, which comes from the realization that if you want to serve God or express your faith in the divine, you have to express it to your fellow human beings, is lost.

How did Gandhi express his faith in humanity? What did he do for humankind? He made human beings conscious of the dimension of individual potentiality. He said, "Look, working with your hands, working manually, is not a sign of backwardness. Wherever we need to supplement human power, we will use machines, but do not convert machines into new gods. Do not convert machines and technology into the only sign of development or progress in humanity. They are necessary. We shall use them to supplement the manpower and animal power in our villages. But human power, productive labor is something sacred."

It is true that Marx and Lenin before Gandhi had already given the same divine messege to mankind, had insisted that the society will be a society of producers, that there will be no intermediaries between the producers and the consumers. They had given a call: "Workers of the World unite!" The proletariat consciousness was created already. But Gandhi created a sense of sacredness around productive labor. Because of Gandhi, it's not something to be sold and bought. It is something through which you can express and unfold your inner powers.

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For Gandhi, the sacredness of labor was not a slogan but a way of life. When people came to join him, as thousands did, he put them to work immediately cleaning latrines, cutting vegetables in the kitchen, doing other necessary manual work regardless of their importance or profession. Because work had been traditionally divided into valued and non-valued categories, work in the second category, manual labor - sweeping floors, cleaning latrines, - was taboo for educated persons. They simply would not, could not do it. Yet Gandhi set barristers and bankers to such work to help them get rid of their vanity and pride, to help them realize that all work is sacred, that work is worship if it is performed with the proper attitude, and that it contributes to the social good.

Another major reason people are turning to Gandhi today is that he was totally committed to the peaceful, humane liberation of the individual not only from political oppression but also from cultural and social oppression. Gandhi was the complete revolutionary, one of the few in human history, who sought to free both the oppressed and the oppressors from the shackles of fear and violence.

RECEIVING THE HERITAGE OF GANDHI

Gandhi came to the world stage at a time when men were struggling against colonial dominance in Asia and Africa and against economic oppression in Europe and America as well as elsewhere. Marx and Lenin had had their day; their teachings were widely known. But people in industrialized countries had put their hope in technology, science, and large scale industry rather than in revolution. Gandhi was aware of these trends through his reading and through his sojourn in Great Britain. He realized early that people were losing faith in man, in his labor, in his capacity for work, and even in the divine. He realized, too, that a fresh approach was essential and devoted himself to developing it.

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Today many of us are still placing our hopes in technology and science. We are fascinated by high technology, by automation, by robotics, by cybernation, and by the prospect of machine with the capacity to make and do everything. And we are even less free than the generation that preceded us. We are passive users, recipients of the ready-made. Our markets are flooded with ready-made goods. We are merely the buyers, the recipients, with the result that our creative energies are blocked, atrophied. Even our entertainments are organized for us, handed to us in tidy, sterile packages.

We have become passive consumers and as we become more passive we expect more things to be done for us by others, by the government, by the state. In our secret hearts, many of us, perhaps most, would like to be members of a welfare or even a totalitarian state because then we wouldn't have to exert ourselves intellectually or physically. This passivity in individuals is the fertile ground in which authoritarianism takes rapid root.

Gandhi was a revolutionary thinker who remembered what most of us forget; people are reservoirs of tremendous power. His teachings prompt awareness that labor, human labor, is not only valuable but sacred. He was not opposed to machines; he felt they should be used but only to complement human labor, that they should not be valued for themselves, or be seen as objects of veneration and worship. Man, Gandhi said, is not to be used for production, but production for Man. The human being is to be at the center, to be the foundation, and at the same time the apex of society.

If you have read any of the futurist books, you have an idea of the extensive sociological and economic changes we are likely to experience in the not-too-distant future. Gandhi the compassionate revolutionary anticipated the human consequences of such changes long ago and

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developed an eighteen-point constructive program designed to liberate the individual through an economic, social, and political revolution.

Gandhi wanted to alter the trends in economic, political, social behavior around him. He offered an agro-centered and agro-based industrial development program for India, that has wide application in its principles to all other countries. He was not a proponent of urbanization, was not in favor of weaning people away from their land and villages. He wanted rather to convert the villages into livable places.

Today, years after independence, these villages are still not livable places. What are these villages like? No drinking water, no cleanliness, no medical facilities. There is dirt, there is class consciousness. The villages are bastions of ignorance, illiteracy, uncleanliness, caste consciousness, and the cruel division between the haves and the have nots. The only visitors are political leaders who go to the villages seeking votes once every three or five years. And once they get the votes, they never return. The whole development of India has resulted in a perpetuation of the exploitation of the village population by city dwellers.

Gandhi encouraged people to go back to their villages, for he believed that the villagers, the farmers, would be the most important citizens in the Indian community. Today, we must go forward to the villages for the problems of cities and towns are not going to be solved unless we convert the villages into livable places.

Gandhi's concern with the social as well as the purely economic aspects of village life, led him to seek equality for women and to undertake one of his most famous social action efforts: the elimination of castes, particularly of the caste of untouchables. The stories of his consultations and discussions with Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables, and of his fast which resulted in the shattering

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of the sanction of untouchability, are thrilling episodes in the life of Gandhi the social reformer and in the history of India.

When opponents to his efforts to liberate the untouchables pointed out that the Vedas themselves support untouchability, Gandhi said, "If the Vedas proclaim untouchability, I will brush aside the Vedas. There is no one untouchable in my eyes. Every human being is sacred." Gandhi did not want to create an untouchability consciousness among the untouchables which could lead to political exploitation. His aim was to eradicate untouchability among the untouchables themselves as well as among those who thought them untouchable.

Elimination of notions of superiority and inferiority in regard to women and to castes would, Gandhi insisted, permit villages to function like loving families. In this harmonious atmosphere Gandhi felt other changes would take place readily and the relationship between villages and cities would be characterized by cooperation and mutual support.

While Gandhi died before his programs could be carried out on a large scale, some of his associates, particularly Vinoba Bhave, sought to carry on his work. Vinoba focused on the critical problem of securing land for villagers. He organized the *Bhoodan* movement, which under the slogan, "Land to the Tiller," began to acquire land for landless farmers. Vinoba soon recognized that acquiring land for individuals was not sufficient, for a program devoted to private ownership would inevitably result in the state also acquiring land.

Vinoba wanted to save India, as he knew Gandhi had also wanted, from state capitalism, for state ownership of the means of production would not lead to the society Gandhi had envisioned. Vinoba then developed his program of acquiring land for villages rather than for individuals. He

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walked over most of India explaining his villagization plan and arranging for gifts of land to villages.

Neither Gandhi's nor Vinobas's efforts were completely successful. Revolutions are seldom totally successful in the beginning. But failures are not defeats. They are merely stepping stones to future successes.

KEEPING THE VISION ALIVE

Gandhi knew, of course that the changes he wanted, the radical transformation of villages and so of the entire society could not be brought about quickly. He knew it would take time for people to understand new ideas, and he realized there would need to provide an intensive education program for old and young alike. He was, not surprisingly, particularly concerned about children's education, for he wanted them to be able to think freshly about their roles in the new society he was working to create. He saw that the traditional institutionalized education focuses on abstractions, does not at all prepare students to cope with the problems of daily life, and he developed an educational program that removed the usual barriers between school and life, that enabled students to acquire and apply skills they would need in their adult lives, and to develop a love of crafts and of nature.

It won't do, of course, to exaggerate the qualities of Gandhi or to idolize him. He was a human being, flesh and bone. He had his weaknesses, his preferences, prejudices. In spite of them all, he was a very great person who experimented, explored, applied his mind and energies to the problems of humanity.

Gandhi's greatness as a person and as a revolutionary is perhaps best exemplied in his concern about the means by which his revolutionary ends were to be accomplished. Unlike most revolutionaries of the past few centuries, he was more concerned about means than ends. "Whatever you want

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to do," he would say, "take care of the means and the ends will take care of themselves."

This principle governed all of his actions even during the most desperate days of his struggle for the political independence of India. On more than one occasion he told his followers, "If you want to win the independence of India through untruths and violence, I'll have no part in it."

Gandhi's followers, as you can easily believe, could not keep pace with him. *"Bapu,"* they said, "We cannot use the word non-violence, people will misunderstand; may we use the word peacefulness?" Gandhi understood the difference between the two and refused. In his *satyagraha* the purity of the means was what he most cared for. All his movements, from 1920 to 1947 were characterized by the heroic struggle by one individual who stood like a rock when it came to truth and non-violence as means to achieving revolutionary ends. That Gandhi could so stand for the purity of means is an indication of the psychic growth of the human race.

Gandhi is not, of course, alone in his deep concern for means. There was a day when Socrates stood up for the purity of means, for a new approach to human life, and he was given a cup of poison. There was a day when Jesus, the prince among human beings, stood up for love and compassion, for his revolutionary approach to the whole of life that is embedded in the Sermon on the Mount. But love, compassion, peace as values of life were not understood and he was crucified. And then came Gandhi. When he talked about truth and non-violence between Hindus and Muslims, Indians and the British, between the laborer and the landowner, people were confused and confounded, and he was assasinated.

The curse of fragmentation was upon us; we thought that people are naturally divided into classes; here is the class that exploits and there is the class that is exploited. We were

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oversimplifying our problems and were shocked when Gandhi pointed out that the roots of human violence are hidden in each human heart. Just as the divine is concealed in the heart, he said, so are the roots of violence. Jealousy, greed, ambition, all of them are there. And he said that if we did not deal with the roots, if we did not eliminate them from our hearts, and permit a new approach to be expressd through truth and non-violence, we would go on repeating the problems and go on commiting the mistakes commited by previous generations.

Gandhi was born in India, but he belongs to the human race and his teachings are for all humankind. They are relevant to the special conditions of India and they are also relevant to conditions existing all over the world.

Some of us may look upon Gandhi as dead and gone, but he is coming back to life everywhere. It is very difficult to kill persons such as Gandhi, Jesus, or Socrates. They don't know how to die. That is our problem and our good fortune.

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Creating Alternative Lifestyles

The legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, the great soul of India and the world, is a rich one. His ideas, programs, dreams, his life, were of great, immediate benefit to his country and have been of immeasurable value to people in every land who seek truth, who struggle for peace and freedom.

The great heritage has, unfortunately, been misunderstood not only in his own country but nearly everywhere. He is honored for his role in freeing India from British rule but Gandhi was not essentially a political leader. Rather, he was a spiritual revolutionary who aimed to transform human society through love and truth, through faith and trust. With his perspective of the totality of life, his perspective of global human life, Gandhi dreamed of, planned for, not just the political independence of India, which for him was merely a means to an end, but for the liberation of all humanity from the bondage of economic as well as political oppression, from the shackles of centralization of power whether technical, industrial, or military.

To break non-violently the bonds that enslave human beings, Gandhi developed a detailed program that became the *Sarvodaya* Movement. (Sarvodaya means the welfare, development of all simultaneously.) This program is a model for peaceful social transformation that has been applied in various forms in more than a dozen countries. The model has yet to achieve wide acceptance and success.

It remains viable, however, and is perhaps the best hope humanity has for survival in an age in which human

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beings are threatened by both nuclear and ecological extinction.

Those of us who want to work for positive social change, who want to share in creating a new society based on unity, on wholeness of life need not only to be aware of the sarvodaya model but also to understand its foundations, its basic principles.

ENVISIONING A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

Out of his extensive reading and his often painful experiences in South Africa, Gandhi evolved his shining dream of a society in which the human family would be free from the bondage of men, of ignorance, of existing political, economic, and social systems. "We can't," Gandhi said, "have a society in which individuals quarrel, in which they have conflicting self-interests. We can no longer tolerate a society in which one person is a slave to another in the name of religion, economics, or politics."

For Gandhi, it was not enough to reject the old society or to describe the glories of a future society. He was committed to bringing a new society into being. He hoped to change existing social and economic orders into new orders that would promote the welfare and growth of all through the sarvodaya program.

Sarvodaya was a proclamation as well as a program, a proclamation of the unconditional freedom of human beings. It was a declaration that there would be no prosperity of the few at the expense of the many, no prosperity through machines and technology at the cost of human beings and other animals.

The very name *sarvodaya* represents Gandhi's intent, for *'sarva'* implies all, and *'udayam'* total growth or development. By combining these word elements, Gandhi sought to convey his idea that total development of all should

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proceed simultaneously. He saw that to make this idea a reality people would have to live in unity, accepting life as a totality in which seeming contradictions such as day and night, birth and death make up a wholeness, a oneness that cannot be fragmented, divided. The human race would, Gandhi, insisted, need to live together as a family sharing resources, working and enjoying together, applying in daily life the spiritual values of truth, love and non-violence.

He did not envision the new society as a pyramid -the usual image - with the mass of people forming a broad base supporting a few elite at the apex. He saw it rather as an oceanic circle of self-reliant villages that could produce all the basic necessities and so be free of the threat of starvation and of exploitation. He reasoned that villages that own the land on which they grow food and fibres for clothing, spin and weave such fibres, have their own source of water and oil for lighting will produce self-reliant people who can govern themselves and successfully resist exploitation. Such villages would have minimum need for the plans and policies of a central government with its network of bureaucrats and its jungle of administrative procedures, and society could move toward stateless self-government.

Gandhi foresaw that the decay and despair in the villages would worsen unless the villagers attained self-sufficiency in terms of their primary needs. Such self-reliance would enable villagers not just to produce what they needed on their own, but also to resist the blandishments of greedy politicians, industrialists, and other opportunitists seeking to exploit local resources without regard for the consequences to the villagers.

The self-reliance that Gandhi wanted for each human being and for the villages as a whole was not a narrow, aggressive self-reliance that would motivate people to take care of themselves at the expense of their neighbors. It was,

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rather, a cooperative, communal self-reliance. While every individual could not provide completely for his or her basic needs, each person could, after doing all he or she could to provide for basic needs, work cooperatively with other members of the community to produce whatever else was required.

Thus for Gandhi the development of self-reliance is a form of service that the individual renders to himself or herself and to the community. If all are self-reliant, he said, no one will be in trouble. Then, he added, villages will be vibrantly alive, filled with strength and fearlessness, able to overcome any attempts at intimidation by would-be oppressors. He saw that when villages can provide their own basic needs, when each villager has a decent, if simple, standard of living, the villages would no longer be vulnerable to bribes, to economic manipulation, to insidious pressure to sacrifice their resources for short-term gains.

In Gandhi's ideal for society, the village, composed of a small group of self-reliant individuals meeting their own basic needs, is clearly the basic unit. Since the villages are the primary social unit, it is vitally important that they attain strength and self-reliance that will permit them to join voluntarily and equally with other villages to create self-sufficient economic and political units based on mutual respect and concern.

On this basis, Gandhi created a program through which he hoped to develop self-reliant villages free from exploitation and injustice. This program, revealed originally in his "Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place," offered eighteen social action points that included the building of communal unity, obliteration of untouchability, development of *Khadi* (handspinning and weaving of cloth), adoption of a new approach to education, the organization of industrial labor on the basis of truth and non-violence, and improvement in the condition of women.

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Gandhi wanted the Indian society that would be created through his multifaceted program to be an exemplar, a model for the rest of the world. In this society, individuals would achieve self-reliance and self-realization through dedicated service to the community, especially to the poorest in the community.

While Gandhi did not announce any priority among his eighteen points, he did pay special attention to the development of *Khadi*. He not only set aside time each day to spin cotton thread himself - taking innocent pride in the amount he could spin - and asked everyone around him, however busy or sophisticated, to engage in spinning but also insisted that his followers wear clothes made from the handspun thread. Through this process, Gandhi impressed upon his followers and the world the importance of, as well as a means for achieving, self-sufficiency. *Khadi* became a persuasive symbol of self-sufficiency, of self-reliance both of which were at the heart of Gandhi's program.

EXPLORING THE PRINCIPLES OF *SARVODAYA*

Underlying Gandhi's concept of the *sarvodayan* society are certain principles or tenets. Among these principles, the central or key principle is that of equality for all.

Equality to Gandhi meant several things. It meant social equality for untouchables and for the several tribes of India. It also meant equality of status and of opportunity for women. And above all it meant economic equality. Gandhi recognized that unless the enormous disparity between the wealthy few and the impoverished millions was eliminated his dream of a non-violent society would be shattered in bloody revolution.

To forestall this grim eventuality, he called on the rich to voluntarily give up their wealth, to share it for the benefit of the general community. He invited the holders of wealth, of great properties, to convert themselves from owners into

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trustees of their possessions, the bulk of which would be used for the common good. He asked them to recognize that the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the cooperation of the poor in society and to accept the notion that if anyone comes into wealth, whether by legacy or industry, all that wealth does not belong to him or to her; what belongs to the person is the right to an honorable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by others. The rest of the wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.

In this theory of trusteeship, the wealthy class would neither be deprived of their possessions nor denied opportunities to exercise their talents and knowledge. They would be stewards of their wealth, be encouraged to use their skills to increase it, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the community. In return for their efforts and as acknowledgement for their remarkable talents, they would receive payment commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society. And their children could inherit the stewardship only if they proved fit.

Gandhi realized that inevitably at least some members of the wealthy class would resist the idea of sharing their possessions. Since the idea of coercion by the state, by law, was inimical to Gandhi's views on non-violence, he proposed that those wealthy persons who would not voluntarily accept trusteeship were to be converted by non-violent, non-co-operation on the part of the people.

A second principle on which the *'sarvodaya society'* is founded is that of ownership of the means of production by the producers. In this society none of the instruments of production is to be commercial coramodities that can be bought and sold. This restriction applies specifically to land, which must be assigned to those who till it. Land is thus not to be controlled directly or indirectly by absentee landlords

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or by large property holders. Furthermore, land is neither to be the property of any individual nor of the State. Instead it belongs to the local community and is assigned to those who work it, who use it to produce staples, such as food, necessary to human society.

In addition to the land, all animals, tools, machines, equipment required for the tilling of the land and for the operation of small-scale local industries are to be utilized and held in common by those living upon the land. And the product of the land, whatever is grown on the land, is to be converted into finished goods in the local community, with the help of appropriate machinery and technology. By placing the means of production in the hands of the producers, Gandhi aimed to minimize industrial conflicts, to eliminate the chain of intermediaries between producers and consumers who necessarily live at the expense of both, and to make local agricultural communities self-sufficient in food, clothing, and other basic necessities.

The principle of ownership by producers is closely tied to another principle: decentralization of production and hence of the economy. Industry as far as possible would be decentralized. Those products essential to harmonious living in local communities would be created through cottage industries, village industries, and small regional industries. *'The sarvodaya scheme'* recognizes that not every industry can be decentralized and seeks a division of industries, some of which would be regional while others, particularly those related to basic human necessities would be reserved for local communities. When this division is made, when appropriate technology is available at the local level, the twin problems of poverty and unemployment will fade away.

Still another important principle underlying *'the sarvodaya program'* is that political power resides in the people. The people must have the opportunity and the means

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to rule themselves. And they must learn to rule well. Political rule is to be based on local self-government, built up from the lowest level. Each village would form a *'gram sabha'*, village council, to take care of local issues. Ten or fifteen *gram sabha* would combine to form a regional *'lok sabha'*, people's assembly, which would discuss and resolve any problems arising in the region or between villages.

In this form of political rule, the central or federal government would be charged with coordinating the activities of the states which in turn would coordinate the activities of the regions or districts. In addition to its coordinating responsibilities, the central government would take care of foreign policy, currency, defense and other matters that cannot reasonably be handled at the district level.

Thus the role of central government would be one of facilitating relations rather than administering rules, regulations, policies to human beings. Most administrative work would be done on the village or district levels. Political rule and power would be dispersed over a broad base rather than concentrated in the hands of a few.

OBSERVING THE POST-GANDHIAN DEVELOPMENT OF *SARVODAYA*

Gandhi recognized that his proposals for creating *'the free sarvodaya society'* would require further revision and refinement. He felt, confident, however, that they were sufficiently developed to provide a sound basis for the non-violent revolution to gain political economic and social freedom for the people of India, he was prepared to launch.

When political independence came, he was ready to establish *'the sarvodayan society'*. He began by making a formal request of the Indian National Congress, which had led the struggle for political freedom, to disband and for its members to become voluntary servants of the people,

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working to create the new society. And he offered guidelines for the actions that would make this sarvodayan society a reality.

Members of the Congress, including Jawaharal Nehru, as well as other prominent Indians, shared Gandhi's dream of India as a world teacher, guiding other countries to achieve political, economic, social freedom. But while these people shared the dream, not all of them agreed with the means proposed by Gandhi.

All could agree that the challenges facing a newly independent India were staggering. They could agree that the problems of educating millions of illiterate people, of eliminating poverty and starvation, of awakening self-confidence, self-assurance, a sense of civic responsibility in people long enslaved were enormous and required immediate attention. But not all could accept Gandhi's non-violent approach, his *sarvodaya* as means for solving these problems.

When the time for decision and action came, Nehru and his colleagues in the Congress rejected as Utopian Gandhi's proposals for a social and cultural revolution aimed at getting rid of corruption and institutions that were democratic in name only.

While these wise decisions-makers pushed India into centralized planning and large-scale industry and ultimately into the corruption and abuses that Gandhi feared, some of his followers continued their efforts to carry out his work. In the first two decades after Gandhi's death, Vinoba Bhave further developed and elaborated *'the sarvodaya concepts'*. In accordance with Gandhi's precepts, Vinoba chose to begin his work with the villages. "Let us begin with the poorest, the landless tiller," he said, and added, "If India's political independence and democracy are to survive, are to be sustained in a world of great turmoil, let there be no one

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landless in this country." He was convinced, like Gandhi, that those who till the land should own the land, that the means of production should belong to the producer.

Vinoba created a program for acquiring land for individual landless tillers, *'the Bhoodan'*, or land gift, program. Carrying out this program required Vinoba and a small group of followers to walk from village to village eliciting in each village donations or gifts of land from landlords to be distributed to the landless tillers. Vinoba's pilgrimages on behalf of the landless took him and his fellow workers around the whole of India several times over a fourteen year period. They collected more than four million acres for redistribution and aroused tremendous enthusiasm, excitement, and goodwill.

In the early stages of the program, the land gifts were recorded and then redistributed to individuals among the landless tillers, a process that preserved private ownership in fact and concept. Vinoba soon realized that holding land individually, privately, almost inevitably leads to conflicts and abuses. He then developed *'the gramdan'*, village gift, program in which land gifts were redistributed not to individuals but to villages to be used collectively. Through this program, Vinoba aimed to eliminate individual ownership of land and to convert the landless tillers from objects of charity into equal, participating members of the community.

The program sought not only to provide land for communal use, but also to persuade villages to join other villages in forming viable economic units large enough to support all village members through agriculture, animal husbandry, and cottage industries. Vinoba aimed to demonstrate that through villagization of land, through cooperative farming and self-reliant small-scale industry people could without conflict of interest, achieve *gram swaraj*, village independence.

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The concept of villagization of land that Vinoba, and Gandhi before him, wanted to convert into reality for the villages of India is unlike other concepts of ownership, whether private or state ownership. It avoids the absentee landlordism and the indifference to soil and people associated with large-scale corporate managership of private ownership on the one hand and on the other it avoids the seemingly inevitable drift into state capitalism associated with state ownership.

State ownership has nowhere lived up to the promises and hopes of those who established it, and has not lead to true socialism. When the land belongs to an abstraction called the state, the relationship between farmers and the land changes. The farmers now work the land for the sake of the state, for the good of the whole state, for the good of the people. They lose their personal concern, their love for the land. They work mechanically without feeling, without care.

When things are done on too large a scale they become inhuman; individuals can no longer relate to them personally. State ownership does not lead to socialism but to the disillusionment of state capitalism.

Gandhi and Vinoba recognized the contradictions and potentials for abuse in both private and state ownership. Vinoba's village ownership of land is distinctly different from the other two forms of ownership. Village ownership is not an abstraction, for in the village each person lives with, sees daily, all the others who share in the ownership. The villagers share one another's sorrows, pains, pleasures. Their lives are spent together. The land is theirs, distributed by mutual consent among those who till it.

Village ownership, unlike state ownership, is not indirect, abstract, remote psychologically, something to which the villagers cannot relate emotionally. They can relate to their

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own village land. Each of them can say, "The land is in my village. It belongs to all of us. It will not be fragmented any more. If after my death, my children choose not to till the land, the land goes back to the village assembly, the village council. It will not remain with my family just because it was once assigned to me."

Thus ownership is connected to the act of tilling the land. The land remains a means of production, does not become a piece of property. Village ownership is neither private nor state ownership; it is a third way.

Vinoba's programs of *bhoodan*, *gramdan*, came into existence after 1951, after the Chinese revolution. Mao took a step forward from Marx when he declared that farmers as well as workers can bring about social change. And Vinoba took a step beyond Mao by demonstrating that farmers, tillers, can bring about social change without creating class consciousness and bitterness, without force, can produce change decently and with dignity. Through his programs, Vinoba gave something new to the world.

Vinoba wanted more from his *gramdan program* than a demonstration of his ideas of ownership. He and his fellow *sarvodaya workers* wanted villages that entered the *gramdan program* to be the nucleus of a stateless society. This goal was to be achieved by decentralizing administration and authority as well as production. Collections or groups of self-sufficient village units were to be the base on which such a self-governing society was founded.

To work toward this goal, *the sarvodaya organization* decided to focus on establishing as many *gramdan villages* as possible and on the development of small-scale industries in these villages to help ensure their self-sufficiency. And to broaden the appeal of the *sarvodaya movement*, to attract urban dwellers and industrial workers to *sarvodaya*, Vinoba added to his idea of land gifts other sorts of gifts, called *'dan'*.

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Thus those urbanites who wished to be part of sarvodaya could participate through *'shramdan'*, a labor gift, contributing labor to a project, or *buddhidan*, an intellect gift, dedicating mental abilities, knowledge to reaching *sarvodayan* goals, or through *jeevandan*, a life gift, dedicating one's entire life to *sarvodaya*.

These elaborations of *sarvodaya* concepts and Vinoba's scheme of combining *gramdan villages* into blocks and such blocks into districts and the districts into states in order to transform the existing government from the lowest level upward seemed to promise early success. Gandhi's goal of self-sufficient, self-governing villages, of the *sarvodayan society* seemed clearly attainable.

As leader of the *sarvodaya movement*, Vinoba insisted that means to creating the necessary changes should be gentle. Through his soft approach, sometimes described as "gentle, gentler, gentlest," he aimed to persuade people to recognize the good, the divine in themselves and in others and then to act on this recognition for the benefit of all.

As members of the *sarvodaya movement* worked with large landowners, with the powerful and wealthy, they met resistance to their efforts at gentle persuasion from those who had difficulty recognizing the good in any but their own selfish interests. In the face of such resistance, many *sarvodaya workers* began to feel that Vinoba's approach was not totally effective, that it was time to return to the Gandhian techniques of mass non-violence, non-cooperation.

Those *sarvodaya* workers who were dissatisfied with Vinoba's approach found a spokesman in Jaya Prakash Narayan, a long-time Marxist Socialist, founder of the Indian Socialist Party, and a staunch supporter of Gandhi.

After the Mahatma's death, J.P. (Jayprakash Narayan) re-examined Gandhi's ideas, explored deeply into his own

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psyche, and questioned the moral possibilities of materialism. What he found in this examination led him to move away from his socialist beliefs and ultimately to embrace *sarvodaya* wholeheartedly. He became the first prominent intellectual to offer a *jeevandan*, a life gift, to *sarvodaya*, the first to dedicate his entire life to the cause.

As part of his contribution to the *sarvodaya* movement, J.P. spent a year living in a village in the state of Bihar and working in a network of 120 villages that made up a block of *gramdan* villages. During this year, J.P. assessed the procedures that *sarvodaya* workers used to collect, register, and re-distribute land and to promote self-sufficiency and confidence in the villages. He recognized that many of these procedures needed refinement and developed recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of sarvodaya work in the villages.

J.P. also became convinced that Vinoba's gentle approach could not succeed in attaining Gandhi's goals because it was based on the assumption that the interests of the government, of an independent India would be the same as those of the mass of its people. At this point J.P. began to advocate that *sarvodaya* workers organize the landless and other poor for non-violent confrontation with powerful private interests and for civil disobedience against the government, which he saw as increasingly abusing its democratic authority.

The ideological differences between J.P. and Vinoba did not lead to disputes between them or to any diminution of their warm regard for each other. It did lead, however, to a weakening, a partial paralysis of the *sarvodaya* movement, for some workers continued to accept and apply Vinoba's approach while others were attracted to J.P.'s views. The movement was further weakened by the arrest of J.P. and other *sarvodaya* leaders for mounting what the government regarded as total revolution.

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As a result of these sad events, the *sarvodaya* movement had to reorganize - after the *sarvodaya* leaders were released from jail - in order to continue the struggle to create a new society through peaceful but determined efforts.

The *sarvodayan* society that Gandhi envisioned, that Vinoba and Jaya Prakash worked so hard to establish, clearly has not yet flowered fully, but it is far from moribund. Gandhi's social revolution lacks the speed of Lenin's, of Mao's. Its growth is slow, but it will, as Vinoba himself predicted, triumph in the end.

RECOGNIZING THE SPIRITUAL STRENGTH OF SARVODAYA

This triumph will not, of course, come without effort. It will come only if all who care deeply about peace, about survival of the human race examine the principles of *sarvodaya*, accept them, and begin to apply them in their personal lives and in their communities. In the meantime, a nucleus, some thousands of people in India, in Sri Lanka, and in other countries carry on the work of *sarvodaya* under the difficult circumstances that hold in the world today.

Can so few - we must realize that the number of people who will work actively for sarvodaya will always be a relatively small number - among the billions on earth ever realize this hope? Those of us who are or who will become sarvodaya workers have little power, limited energy of the usual kind. We will not be able to meet the vast challenges that face us, carry out the seemingly endless work to be done, if we can not find fresh sources of energy, if we remain prisoners of our minds and brains. The brain has a limited capacity, the mind is tied to the past, to past patterns of behavior. We have to liberate ourselves before we can liberate others. We have to liberate ourselves from the shackles of mind and brain and explore sources of non-cerebral and non-physical

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energy. There is a source of infinite energy contained in us; each of us is potentially divine.

Wherever we work, in villages or elsewhere, we who would be *sarvodaya* workers will have to devote time, an hour or two each day, to the personal investigation of the soul force in each of us. If we do not discover it in ourselves, if we do not realize it, how can we talk usefully to others? Real communication flows from one heart to another. *Sarvodaya* workers have a sacred responsibility to discover the essence of their beings, the essence of the spiritual potential in each of them. This discovery is supremely important, for, as Gandhi pointed out, soul force needs to operate as a social value. And the discovery is not a single event, but an on-going process for all of us.

What happens when the soul force is expressed or awakened?

When the soul force is awakened, people are no longer afraid, they are not afraid of the police, of the government, of the state, of leaders. They are not afraid of anything, even of death. Now people everywhere are cursed by fear. We must rid ourselves of this fear. The consciousness that we are potentially divine, that there is much more to us than the body, dissipates this fear. When this message is carried to the people -as Gandhi carried it in his inimitable simple style, as Vinoba carried it walking around India for fourteen years - they will lose their fear.

Today it is those who would be *sarvodaya* workers who must carry this message, who must keep the waters of spirituality flowing through the world so that the people can rediscover, regain their strength and their power. In the atmosphere of corruption and cowardice that surrounds us, we can fight only with our best weapon, moral force. It is the sarvodaya workers who can stimulate the moral force, *'Lok Atma'*, in addition to carrying on other work. The foundation

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for all this resides in moral values and the awareness of the divinity in each human being.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF SARVODAYA FOR CHANGE

To realize the great potential for positive change in *sarvodaya*, each worker must be free of allegiance to castes and creeds. Blind allegiance to class, creed, caste, tribe is ruining many countries. The people struggle for, sing about, freedom, but are divided, split, imprisoned in small sects, dogmas, castes. *Sarvodaya* workers must be free from exclusive loyalties. Their loyalty is necessarily to all humanity. Hence *sarvodaya* brings a breath of fresh air to cultural closeness, helps others to free themselves from the shackles of exclusion.

If *sarvodaya* workers can remain free from exclusive adherence to states, castes, creeds, they can carry out their responsibility for awakening people to their own dignity, their own responsibilities. India, for example, is politically free, has a parliamentary democracy based on universal franchise, but the Indian people are not fully aware of what that means; they are not conscious of their rights, do not know what civil liberties are, nor are they aware of their legal, moral, social responsibilities in a democracy.

The responsibilities of those of us who are either *sarvodaya* workers or sympathetic to *sarvodaya* are great; the means we have available to carry out these responsibilities are often limited, simple. Working in rural areas, organizing projects, leading discussions and songs, we may lose awareness of the large perspective of *Gandhian philosophy* and of its relevance to the world and become discouraged because the work does not produce much immediate result.

In this situation two things will help. One is to realize, to be aware, that we are sowing seeds in the hearts of people,

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in their psyches and minds that will flower into a new society, into a new social order of truth and non-violence. This awareness will stimulate self-confidence and self-assurance.

The second thing is to realize that our fellow workers will help us to enhance our best qualities and to minimize our weaknesses. Sharing work, sharing moments of joy and despair, knowing one another's strengths and weaknesses will lead us to encourage each other. As a family of workers we will have our differences, even disputes, but our commonalities are far more important than our differences.

This family feeling will sustain us. We do not have money; we will for a long while be a minority group with limited political power. But we have the great strength, the power of belonging to one another, of being a family. The sense of family is a source of our strength. We must protect it; we must avoid weakening it by doubting each other's motivations or bona fides, or by indulging either in self-praise, which often leads to jealousy, or in behind-the-back criticisms.

Typically, volunteer organizations, social service groups are torn by personal, temperamental conflicts, tensions, misunderstandings that create unnecessary misery and suffering. In *sarvodaya*, we must raise ourselves psychologically, culturally to a level at which we will behave with dignity and decency wherever we are. Our relationships should reflect our faith in non-violence. If we cannot resolve our quarrels, our differences non-violently, with love, with mutual understanding and trust, we will not be able to model *ahimsa*, non-violence, to set the example that will persuade others of the truth of *sarvodaya*.

Please remember that we as *sarvodaya* workers, will be social *sanyasis*, political renunciates, wielding no power except that of love, that of non-violence. If we wield these powers well, we will open the gateway to a new dynamic of human relationship.

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Sarvodaya does not only prompt this new dynamic of relationships, profess that all life is one, but also aims at creating social, economic, political, and administrative structures on the basis of love, of truth, and of non-violence. When the unity of life is accepted as a reality, the whole of humanity will turn to the *Gandhian* way of living, of holding to one set of values, one code of conduct for all fields of action. Gandhi said, "If life is one, if truthfulness is a value at home, truthfulness must also be a value in our economic, political, and social life. If sacrifice, concern, and care for others are values at home, then they are absolute values in all fields of action."

Sarvodaya, founded on Gandhi's concepts of unity of life, unity of values, is a thorough-going revolution. It is a holistic approach to transforming individuals and the social and political structures simultaneously. It requires the inner development of the individual and outward social change to go hand-in-hand. We will not sacrifice the individual or wait, on the other hand, for individual growth before we see positive social change.

With its concern for both means and ends, with its basis in love, truth, non-violence, sarvodaya is strongly appealing in a strife-torn world. Its appeal lies in its promises of peace through love, of equality, of genuine sharing and caring, of a life of compassion and cooperation for all and by all. For its promises as well as for its programs, *sarvodaya* deserves further study.

Gandhi offered profound challenges to the human race to move away from violence, anger, hatred as dynamics of human relationship, from greed as the core of economics, from lust for power as the basis for politics. He asked us to consider what kind of economics, politics, lifestyles we will have which will reflect our love for one another, our faith in the potentialities of each person. Gandhi offered suggestions

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on the *sarvodayan* society, offered his constructive programs, and Vinoba and J. P. Narayan elaborated and extended the contribution of Gandhi, but we have yet to rise fully to Gandhi's challenge.

Rising to this challenge does not mean slavishly following the *sarvodaya* model designed for a country in which most of the people live in villages. Each group of caring people will need to recreate sarvodaya to meet the local situation and circumstances. Gandhi showed the way; now lovers of truth interested in creating alternative lifestyles, have the opportunity to learn from the sarvodaya model, improve, adapt it and perhaps share it.

Those who take up the challenge can be assured that light is always stronger than darkness, truth more powerful than untruth, love more courageous than violence. Light, love, truth will prevail.

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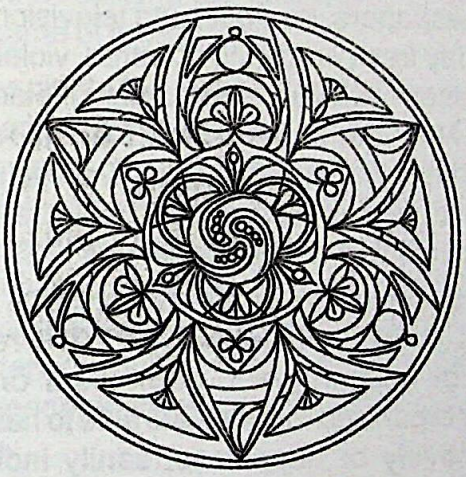
Part III

Activating Wholeness



Life was created long before we were born and shall be here long after we have gone. It is holy and sacred. There is no moral right for any of us to exploit nature, the fellow creatures, or other human beings.

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Transforming Society

The relevance, the absolute necessity of love, truth, non-violence to global peace, to human survival is clear, is very nearly self-evident. Yet while it is evident that in view of nuclear arms the human race can survive only by living together in peace, preparations for war go on around the world.

Our newspapers, our radio and television broadcasts reveal each day fresh eruptions of hatred, violence, mistrust in various places - a nearly endless list of places. In every country, in every part of the world, there is restlessness, uneasiness, mistrust and these feelings, particularly mistrust and suspicion, are expressed in political strategies, in the maneuverings of international gatherings.

We are passing through a grave, a critical period; none of the ideals or institutions that we have relied upon - democracy or communism, capitalism or socialism, rationalism or organized religion - are able to help us achieve peace collectively or happiness, sanity individually. As nations, we have at best only partial peace, a peace that at any moment may turn to war. As individuals, we are dissatisfied, unbalanced, miserable.

The context of our lives has been changed significantly by science and technology since the Industrial Revolution. And as that context changed, we dreamed of, schemed for, a new, a better life for people, a life in which every want would be satisfied. In today's reality, we see that even in affluent countries where many people can satisfy readily not only basic needs but also frivolous desires, the individual is

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unhappy, fear-ridden. The family unit is crumbling; individuals are frustrated, disaffected. Science and technology enable many of us to live in comfort, even luxury, but they do not enable us to live in peace, to share equitably the resources of our beautiful earth.

DISPELLING THE MYTH OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Clearly, finding the way to global peace and harmony is not easy. There are many number of obstacles to be overcome before we can share resources fairly, achieve lasting peace. Certain of these obstacles can be seen as myths that must be exploded, dispelled so that we can deal directly with the reality of our situation and avoid the self-destructive game of nuclear war.

Perhaps chief among these dangerous myths is that of national sovereignty. Today science and technology have created an international context in which efficient transport, communication, information exchange are vitally necessary to our economic and political life. In this context, we are compelled to live as a global human family. There can be no sovereignty of nations when economic life is so closely and intricately interwoven. The economic inter-dependency of nations has rendered the word national sovereignty farcical, meaningless.

We cannot think of a global human family - an important first step toward world peace - if we are still psychologically attached to national sovereignty. Today each nation wants to reserve, to exercise its sovereignty politically, and at the same time declares it wants to contribute to world peace. These two things cannot, do not, go together. If such behavior persists, it leads to split personality, to national schizophrenia.

We yearn for peace, but we cannot have peace because we continue to identify with attitudes and emotions

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that are out of date, that have no relevance in the present context. Gone are the days of political imperialism; whatever remnants are still with us will soon be washed away. Gone are the days of colonialism; there may still be a few colonies but the sanction for colonization disappeared from the human psyche after World War II, along with the sanction for political imperialism.

We must watch closely, be keenly aware of what is happening on the world stage because all our lives are woven together. We may live in Australia, in Japan, in the Hawaiian Islands, in France, England, or Germany, yet we are using products from countries other than our own.

Wherever we live, we are likely to drive Japanese cars, use cloth made in China, wear clothes made in India, use American tools, and German machines. If we think of the gadgets we use, of the wardrobes we wear, we will see how closely our lives are knit. We can no longer live without one another. We must think in terms of a global human family, and dispel the myth of national sovereignty; otherwise there is no hope of ending war, of achieving peace.

Unfortunately this myth is both enduring and pervasive. It remains with us not only because the politically superstitious nourish it but also because the rest of us continue to accept the authority of the concept. Science and technology have advanced at terrific speed in the last forty years but we have not kept pace psychologically.

Too often our views, our minds, our responses are appropriate to an earlier, more primitive context. We can say, even be convinced that national sovereignty, economic independence is out-moded, no longer relevant, but we are not free of the old authority of such concepts. We still dance to the tune of this authority.

Some of us, and more all the time, see the lack of relevance of national sovereignty, realize the futility of the

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political and economic forms associated with it. But still nations and their governments follow these nineteenth-century ideas, still aspire to conquer others ideologically and economically if not politically, while insisting they want peace, that they are striving to solve the problems that hinder peace.

It is true that these nations, clinging tightly to their precious sovereignty, have tried a variety of ways of creating international peace. They tried, for example, to use political power by establishing first the League of Nations and later the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. From these political institutions and forums, the nations expected that a high standard of behavior on the part of all nations would emerge. They were, of course, disappointed.

We have seen the collapse of the league of Nations and the failure of the United Nations in case after case. Frequently, nations have refused to listen to the orders of the united Nations or have withdrawn their support if they could not get their way. Today organizations such as the United Nations have lost the confidence of people, no longer have their sanction. It has become clear that we cannot achieve peace through these international organizations, through internationalism, because each member state, each sovereign nation competes for its own interests against the interests of other nations. The representatives of each nation participate in international gatherings with the conditioning of a national, indoctrinated mind.

As a result, the United Nations, the International Court of Justice are merely intellectual decorations. Such institutions have become little more than platforms for postponing wars, for adjusting narrow national interests to avoid war temporarily. Political power, international political organizations, have failed to control tension, contradictions, conflict.

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The nations have also tried to use the power of thought, of ideology to reduce or eliminate international tension. Some socialist nations thought that if they could indoctrinate, brainwash people, with certain ideologies peace would follow. But indoctrination, regimentation of thought could not create peace.

Such behavior led to conflict not only between East and West, between communist and non-communist countries but also between members of the communist bloc. When we look at the affairs of East European countries, at events in the Soviet Union and China, we see that tensions and conflicts have not, and could not be resolved through ideology.

The nation states have also tried two other ways to resolve the international problems obstructing peace. One way is through the power of money. The more affluent nations thought that if they gave money, made loans as aid to poorer, less developed countries, they could create peace. But this effort to buy peace has failed, though it has alleviated misery and suffering to some extent.

The other way is through the power of military force. For many people it was always clear that force of arms could not create a positive peace, but many nations remain unconvinced, though even they are becoming apprehensive. They have begun to doubt whether arms, particularly nuclear arms can create even a balance of power, let alone real peace. They watch the arms race between the superpowers and wonder.

Today the Soviet Union and the United States have vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, weapons that are now spreading to other countries and the two superpowers are beset by fears. The United States is afraid of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union continually doubts, suspects, is fearful of the United States. The two great nations live in fear and

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out of this fear play games on the chessboard of the world; maneuvering in attack and defense. They shift their pawns, display their aggressions, but always just short of provoking actual war, of forcing their opponent to launch a nuclear attack with attendant threats to the survival of the human race. They do not wage war upon each other openly, directly. Instead there is a false peace full of suspicion and fear.

Maintaining a balance of terror is not creating peace; military force can do nothing more. Even the governments involved see dimly that peace cannot be created through arms races. But they do not consider giving up arms of any kind because of their desire to dominate, control others.

As a result, munition makers flourish. These industrialists exert enormous influence on the governments of their respective states to keep the game going, to maximize profits. And as long as the arms race goes on, talk of peace, of arms control is merely wishful thinking, just an exchange of pleasant ideas that can never be converted into reality. And the rest of us have to live in fear, in terror, with the nightmare of impending nuclear war.

Today we live on the slopes of a vast volcano that threatens to erupt at any moment, spewing forth death and destruction. If we do not achieve peace soon, there will be no one left to wage wars. In this desperate situation, we may have to forego national sovereignty, rid ourselves of that myth, and take the unusual step of relying on the yet-to-be-awakened power of the people.

RECOGNIZING CENTRALIZED PRODUCTION AS A BARRIER TO PEACE

Another dangerous myth that bars our way to peace is the myth of the necessity of centralized production to human progress. This myth came into existence after the Industrial Revolution in Europe, a revolution that soon spread to many

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countries. This industrial revolution, based on applications of science and technology which in turn rest on the philosophical assumptions of Dascartes and the mechanics of Newton, relied extensively on the centralization of production. The material success arising from the Industrial Revolution created the illusion that if a country wants progress, production must be centralized.

When production is centralized, economic power is also centralized. And when production is not for home consumption only but also for export, the producer requires markets, must search for markets, must keep markets secure.

In these circumstances, the producers need the help of politicians and often of the military. Consolidation, centralization of production and of economic power leads inevitably to concentration of political power. The industrialists, the politicians, the military come together in an unholy trinity. None of the three can stand alone; together they defend and justify each other; together they constitute the supreme political authority.

At least two dire consequences follow the centralization of production and economic power. One consequence is that progress and prosperity are defined in terms of gross national product, of profits. And national profit seeking leads to international competition and strife; peace is sacrificed for profit. The second consequence is the destructive effect on people. Initiative is reduced, creative energies blocked. Passive recipients of the ready-made become lazy, lethargic. They soon lose dignity and self-confidence.

The obsession with machines and large-scale production oppresses and exploits people since such production creates a managerial class with special privileges and powers. This class dominates the masses of workers, of people in both communist and non-communist countries,

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doling out meager wages and benefits while reserving for itself luxuries and privileges.

We have said that the dangerous myth of national sovereignty must be exploded. Let us say, too, that the myth of centralized production, of economic sovereignty, is equally dangerous and must be dispelled if we are to have peace. We must give up measuring human progress on the basis of machine production and export profit. As long as we depend on the present economic structures there is no hope of peace, no possibility of sharing resources equitably.

We have to take a fresh, a revolutionary approach to production, to economics. We have to look at our current economic structures in an entirely new way. We need an economics for peace, a politics for peace that will permit us to share resources, to eliminate starvation and need. Even though human beings are trained to ambition and competition, sharing is something the world's heart craves subconsciously. We have an urge to love, a need to be loved, a need to share pain, joys, the sorrows and pleasures of life. In the present economic and political circumstances, we can do none of these things.

DEVELOPING A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

Finding ways to remove these obstacles, to transform society, to clear the path to peace is the challenge facing us at the end of the twentieth century. It is a lovely challenge, a challenge worthy of serious human beings dedicated to the cause of peace, to the survival of humankind. But before we take up this challenge, let us be clear what we want, what we mean by peace.

Today there is no leader, political, economic, religious who does not claim to speak in the name of peace. Peace, co-existence, happiness are the slogans of the day. But what is this peace these leaders offer? Some offer a political peace established by sovereign states to serve their own

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interests. Some offer a legislative peace which is to be monitored by international agencies such as the International Court of Justice to insure the absence of war.

And many offer the all too familiar military peace in which vast forces armed with nuclear weapons face each other across national borders and strike the balance of peace on the scales of naked force. All of us know very well that there will be no victors and no vanquished in a nuclear war. In nuclear warfare victory and defeat are equally meaningless. The peace in the world today is a peace of terror born of the fear of nuclear war.

The leaders who offer these forms of peace seek to achieve their peace in different ways, through different approaches, some traditional, some revolutionary, but all similar in that they are partial, fragmentary. Fragmentary revolutions are no revolutions; fragmentary peace is no peace. The broken, tattered peace that the world has known since 1945 is a strange hot peace that matches the perennial cold war.

We want, need a whole, lasting peace. To attain it, we will have to look objectively at all the elements, forces, powers, ideas, dangers, surrounding us, investigate for ourselves, not accepting anything we have not understood, have not discovered in our own lives, for accepting the authority of ideas of beliefs is a form of slavery, a way of losing freedom.

If we are ready to take up the challenge of creating genuine peace, there are things to be done, a start to be made in finding viable alternatives to the tired solutions now offered by our political leaders.

One essential thing to be done, and quickly, is to re-examine, re-consider the economic policies and structures that we have created. The present structures are not

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congenial to peaceful, harmonious living. People everywhere live under the stress of economic pressure, are victimized by such pressure. The inhuman speed with which we have to work in industrialized societies with highly-centralized production units makes living nearly intolerable.

It is time to speak out against the unfairness, the oppression of these pressures and to begin to cooperate with one another on a global level to find ways to change the current economic structures. We can make our voices heard. People in every country, whether democratic or socialist, are demanding of their governments an economy and a politics for peace. They are making it clear that we don't want war, don't want exploitation. We will have to become more articulate, more vocal, register our dissent and get together to struggle peacefully against the continued imposition of exploitative economic structures.

We need to restructure our economic way of living so that those who need receive and those who have a surplus share. Then there will not be an American standard of living, a Swiss and Dutch standard. Then there will not be the poverty and starvation of Southeast Asia, of Sri Lanka, of India, of African countries. We will then come to a human standard of living, to the circumstance in which there are no longer the rich and the poor but simply those who are fed and clothed and live happily.

At present, our economic structures, our large-scale centralized units of production dehumanize, depersonalize the individual. In these structures, the consumer never meets the producer. Production has lost its charm and consumption has lost its grace. In the factory, workers never meet as individuals, as persons, but only as categories of bosses, technicians, salespersons, agents. The structure is such that we have no time to live as whole human beings, to meet one another as total human beings.

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What we need urgently are alternative economic forms and structures that will permit us to live together without exploiting one another. Our current structures are based on the assumption that we human beings are selfish, are consumed by an urge for property, for ownership. We must now ask ourselves, must discover, whether it is possible to appeal to other aspirations, other potentials contained in the human heart which certainly crave for love and peace and brotherhood as well as property.

Selfishness is no doubt there but selfishness is not the totality, not the essence of the human heart. We must find out if it is possible to create economic structures, to build economic relationships, not based on selfishness, structures that will function morally as the servants of human beings and not as their masters.

One answer to our questions is found in the principles of *sarvodaya* worked out by Gandhi, Vinoba, and J. P. Narayan. On these principles, it is possible to build decentralized economic structures based on the concept of *'gram swaraj'*, or self-rule, in which the basic economic unit is small but viable in terms of population, diversity of occupation.

This economic model can be most readily adopted by developing countries, which clearly need to find an alternative way of utilizing science and technology to solve their unemployment and poverty problems. Such countries cannot hope to emulate successfully the economic patterns developed in Europe over the past two hundred years.

The *sarvodaya* model is applicable to the developed, affluent countries but will take longer to establish. These nations will begin to see its advantage as the resources on which their large-scale economies are based start their inevitable decline. Then perhaps we will see global adoption of the *sarvodaya model*.

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This model is not the only possible model, of course, but it has the advantage of offering a clear positive human alternative to our current economic models and it has the further advantage of simplicity. In formulating this model, Gandhi, as always, aimed for the elegance of simplicity. He was a great seer who has shown the global human family a simple way of living in which we are not afraid of one another and in which human relationships do not stimulate competition, comparison, aggression. On the contrary, the very way of living replaces these negative motivations with love, friendship, and cooperation.

The Gandhian economic approach, which complements human and animal power with technology, has already been implemented on a small scale and can be implemented on a large scale. When this larger implementation takes place, our economic structures and our notion of progress will be human based, labor based, and not money based.

The target of industrialization and development will be the cultural growth of human beings. We will no longer measure progress by per capita income or national income. That society in which there is less tension and more harmony, less conflict and more cooperation will be looked upon as truly progressive.

Gandhi argued that the welfare, the growth, the happiness and peace of all human beings depends on creating a social and economic order in which interests will not come into conflict. His view, his *sarvodaya model*, throws down a big challenge to the human race. Taking up this challenge will require us to adopt a revolutionary approach. We will need to change not only the quality of our minds, our behavior but also the existing relation of productive labor to money and the relation of money to consumer products.

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Changing these relationships, perhaps eliminating money from the relationship between producers and consumers does not mean that we will return to a simple barter system. It does mean that we must find an alternative that will be convenient without the risk of exploitation, and it does mean that we will seek to eliminate the intermediaries between producer and consumers. In a simple, decentralized economy the intermediaries who now live on the backs of both producers and consumers will not be needed.

As we work to bring about these changes, we must remind ourselves that economics like politics is not an end in itself. Both are organic parts of life; both are related to the ultimate truth of the oneness that includes the human race. We need a new approach to economics and to politics that stresses this oneness, the unity of life. Gandhian economics with its emphasis on decentralization of technology and economic power was designed to liberate human beings from all the shackles of centralization - centralized industrial, economic, military, political power - that hold us in bondage. Under the bondage of these centralized powers, the whole human race, whether living in democratic or non-democratic countries, is tortured, suffers and groans.

CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO POLITICS

Our efforts to transform existing economic structures are doomed to failure if we do not at the same time seek to alter other power structures, and particularly political structures. Today politics - power politics, party politics - permeate the life of every individual. We depend increasingly upon the state, upon politicians, upon political power, which in every country, democratic or otherwise, is centralized. This centralization of political power, linked as it is to economic and military power, limits the freedom of each individual. We need to find alternatives to centralization, to current political

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structures. We must discover how best to limit political power so that it serves us without encroaching upon our freedom.

As we begin to re-examine our political structures, to investigate alternatives, we must recognize that the problems we face in the world as well as our political institutions have not come into being recently. They are the result of human activity over the last several centuries; they are deeply rooted in our cultures and in our thinking and will not be easily changed.

In the last half century, we have fought two world wars, yet today the desire to resolve problems through war and violence seems as strong as ever. We have witnessed the futility of violence but resort to it regularly. We see that violence does not solve our problems but not having an alternative we use it, try to limit its scope and postpone the solution of our gravest problems by dividing countries, by separating peoples as we have done in many places.

These problems will remain unresolved, will grow more grave until we realize they are related to our whole way of living. If we are going to depend more and more on machines - automation, computerization - if we are going to create more and more materials for people without raising their level of consciousness, we will create still more problems for ourselves. If we use our science and technology to create a context in which the human race will have to live as a global family but refuse to give up our myth of national sovereignty, of centralization, we will obviously have more problems.

In this situation, what can those of us who are interested in social action, in finding solutions to world problems as quickly as possible do?

One thing that we can do immediately is to encourage people in every country to raise their voices against war, to bring peaceful, non-violent pressure on their respective

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governments to stop selling arms. If the two superpowers alone discontinued selling arms, we would see a big change in a short time.

We must encourage people not only to put non-violent pressure on their governments to stop the sale of arms but also to look at their whole way of living. We all must realize that our way of living has created our problems, that something is wrong, or missing, that our confort-loving, pleasure-seeking patterns lead to exploitation and to war.

Another important thing social activists can do is to encourage the formation of a world platform, of a United People's Organization to replace the United Nations Organization. Clearly nations are not going to unite because their interests are in conflict. It is only the peole who can unite. We must help people everywhere to assert themselves, to arise, to explore social, economic, and political alternatives.

We need to hold seminars, discussions, talks at every crossroad of society on the nature of economics and politics for peace. We need to encourage the sanity of sharing and discourage the insanity of selfish luxury. And we need to help develop a strategy for love and compassion that will lead to cooperation and sharing. Such a strategy is urgently needed but governments are incapable of developing or implementing it. The people will have to mobilize their intellectual and moral resources in order to plan and implement this strategy.

In carrying out such a strategy, we will have to see to it that nationalism and internationalism are superseded by a global approach to problems. Since national sovereignty is out of date, we will need to create a world government in order to share resources equitably, to insure that there is no starvation or dire poverty for anyone.

Before we can establish our world government, we have to ask ourselves whether people can rule themselves,

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whether governments of and by the people are possible or simply convenient political myths.

Vinobaji addressed himself to this question and provided perhaps the most persuasive answer in his concept of *'Lok Niti'*, the politics of service by the people. As part of his *sarvodaya* philosophy and approaches, Vinoba visualized a group of people -they might be called social activists - who are dedicated to bringing about social transformation without aspiring to political power; the politics of service replaces the politics of power.

Those dedicated to the politics of service would insure that governments truly represent the people, that the values of the people, truth, non-violence, peace, become a significant force in government. They would model leadership without self-interest, effective action without exploitation, decision making without divisiveness. They would thoroughly understand politics and international relations, but would offer another dynamics for governing and relating that would not lead to injustice and war.

Eventually every citizen would become a servant of the people and insist that governments be responsive to the values and needs of people throughout the globe. When service becomes the dominant motivator, not power, then we can be optimistic about government for the people and harmony for the global human family.

Vinoba's concept is fresh and exciting and untried. Like many new, powerful ideas it is disturbing, particularly to those nourished on theories of party politics, of power politics, of political elitism. Such people are typified by revolutionary leaders who struggle against oppressive political regimes and having achieved success become counter-revolutionaries when they begin to wield political power. The oppression, hatred, injustice that marked the old regime is repeated in the new regime. Vinoba's *'Lok Niti'*, the politics

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of the people, of service by the people, offers strong hope that the cycle of revolution and counter-revolution can be broken, that a new society based on genuine equality, on the Gandhian values of truth, love, and non-violence can be created.

Clearly, the present economic and political systems are not conducive to such values. We will have to eliminate these systems, replacing them with structures based on values that lead to peace and harmony. We will have to find a way to apply science and technology humanely, in accordance with basic human values and without making a fad of decentralization or of any concept we choose to implement.

When we have established truth, love, and non-violence as our values, when we have created our new economic and political structures, learned to use science and technology appropriately, machines and material advances will no longer be the gauge by which we measure the progress and prosperity of civilization; the prevalence of justice, of equality, the quality of the human mind, of human behavior will be our gauge.

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Respecting the Earth

The evidence is clear and abundant, isn't it, that we are not meeting our responsibility for living in harmony, at peace with the natural world. We have long regarded nature as a vast treasure trove which we are free to plunder for our pleasures. We pollute the air and the waters, deplete the soil, ravish all resources. We burden the earth with our excessive populations, now so large relative to the capacity of the earth to support that soon, perhaps within four or five generations, the human species will face extinction from irreversible ecological imbalances.

If we continue to pursue selfish ego-centered lives all the beings of this glorious earth will be at risk. Our lives are so intimately intertwined, if we continue to go mad with greed, pollute our lives and environments with callous, self-centered behavior, we will drag all the creatures along in our insane drive for self-destruction.

Our arrogance leads us to indulge in whatever pleasure is the fashion of the day without consideration for the depleted resources vital to the other creatures, the scars that will be left as heritage to the young, the starving millions who are victimized by our exploitation.

Either we continue in our stupor of self-indulgence and blindly ignore the rapid exhaustion of the earth, our life support system, or we awaken to unpleasant facts and assume responsibility for the devastation we have wrought. As human beings with highly-evolved consciousness we are capable of seeing clearly what we have done to the creatures and the earth in our hopeless desire to find

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happiness, security, power in endless acquisition of material goods, dominion over land.

We have the capacity to be fully responsible for the falseness of our decadent ways of living. The question is will we awaken in time.

LIVING OUR ORGANIC RELATIONSHIPS

If we choose to become responsible citizens in the family of beings on the planet, we will have to understand at profound levels that we are organically related to all of living, and any attempt to cut off from this vital relationship is suicide. We must face the fact that we are not made of plastic, and cannot successfully live in a mechanical world of our own construction.

We cannot turn ourselves into artificial, superficial entities uprooted from the natural world and exist totally in the manmade world without grave consequences. We are attempting to recreate our lives in our own image, as plastic and machine-oriented as our intellects can manage. We are more and more an invention of our minds.

We are insanely anxious to pull out of the totality, and create a parallel existence in which we are the masters and are apart as possible from the forces and rhythms of natural living. If we succeed, we will have spelled our doom, for our intellects, no matter how clever, inventive, haven't the capacity to create the conditions essential for our complex organisms, and haven't the love to heal, restore, revitalize our sensitive beings.

That is why we as modern people devoted to science and technology are perpetually wounded, our deep needs are unfulfilled. Scientists, industrialists can in their cleverness address the superficial needs of society for material comforts, sensual pleasures, physical security, but they haven't the scope, the intelligence to meet the deeper, holistic needs of humanity.

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We have all, not only the scientists and technicians, misused our intellect to assert supremacy, to grasp for ourselves, to take from others and hoard so that we can feel secure. We have tried mastery and have failed miserably; yet we hold tight to hope that in the next leap of scientific, technological advance we will be beyond our intimate links with the natural world.

We are capable of creating, and existing for short periods of time in, artificial environments far from the earth, filtering, cooling, heating the air we breathe, producing food substitutes from chemicals, sealing ourselves off from nature, but essentially we remain part of nature, retain our relationship however we may distort it. The organisms we call our bodies can be controlled superficially by our intellects, but fundamentally they are of, and related to, the wholeness of life. And it is only in this wholeness that they are adequately nourished, can be revitalized, healed.

When we make these elaborate experiments of living in concrete and plastic environments of our own invention, we have no idea the damage we are doing. Because we do not understand fully how dependent we are on the rhythms, the forces, the energies, the vitality of the natural world, we cannot comprehend why cut off from our organic relationships, we are increasingly neurotic, chronically fatigued, easily prone to illness, restless and unhappy. Obviously, when we are uprooted from our life support systems we will suffer. We do suffer and we will go on suffering and creating endless misery for other beings. Yet we persist in the highly erroneous notion that we can enslave our lives and bodies to the will of the intellect.

Would it be very shocking if we discovered that our bodies do not really belong to you or me? Each body is not a separate entity as we imagine it to be. Invisibly each is related and connected with all others and with the trunk of

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the tree, the wing of the bird, the sky. We cannot stake out our bodies as private territories and successfully put them under full dominion of the intellect. All such attempts to take our bodies as personal possessions into the manmade world are bound to fail. The attempt creates an inner division, a tension between the fact of relatedness and the illusion of separateness. There can be no peace, no relaxation, no true concern for the earth until this artificial division is eliminated.

As long as I consider what is 'me' and 'mine' to be a separate territory from what is not-me and not-mine, no matter how stringently I am compelled to avoid exercising my greed on other territories, the tendencies, the motives will be there and whenever the external guard is weak or missing, the ego will assert its imperialistic desires. There will be no freedom from exploitation until the motive of exploitation is no longer master of humankind. There will be no true rhythm, harmony of wholeness as long as the human being, the most intellectually capable of the creatures, lives in fragmentation and puts the stamp of fragmentation on the earth.

Even though we have great potential, when we lead fragmented lives, out of harmony, rhythm with nature, we cannot be fit companions for other beings. As fragmented beings living with a variety of masks, motives and calculations we have nothing essential to share.

A tiny bird or a tiny blade of grass or a delicate flower by the wayside gives out its total beauty, the essence of its life, but somehow we human beings cannot even emanate the essence of our beings; instead dulled by playing ego roles we can offer only calculations.

Human beings almost everywhere, and particularly in the affluent countries, have lost the grace, the charm of companionship with other beings. We are taken up with money, physical comfort, merciless economic competition,

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and the standards of social respectability. Other beings are resources to be used for our pleasures or to help us avoid pain. No wonder the creatures run away from us in distrust; we no longer have the innocence to be their companions. Doesn't it bring intense sorrow to the heart when a delicate bird flies away from us in fear?

We are conditioned by society to get something out of every situation; if we don't acquire something, we consider the event a waste of time. The conditioned part of the mind is trained to move outward from the center of the ego, touch the forms, colors, sounds, shapes and bring back either a piece of information or an experience. The conditioned mind seeks in every moment to acquire something that can be possessed, stored for later use.

We are rarely in nature without the motive of acquiring, possessing, meeting our selfish needs. We go on excursions into nature to indulge in sensual pleasures, have experiences, acquire knowledge, grasp the harmony of nature so that we can be minimumally restored and return to living unbalanced existences in the cities. Are we ever in nature for the joy of companionship, communion, to live in essential oneness?

Whenever we are in nature with a motive, the motive vibrates, communicates its self-centered message. Any ambition, whether highly idealistic or base, creates a barrier of resistance and then intimate communication with totality is lost. Motive or ambition indicates the active presence of the ego, the conditioned separation of the subject and object, the me and the not me. Whenever the ego, the conditioned is operating, we are distracted by gross energies of the conditioned and are not aware of the subtler forces of the unconditioned, the whole.

But our present, twisted relationship with the natural world is neither necessary nor inevitable. Suppose that we

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are out for a walk in choiceless, motiveless, effortless being with the life around us. We are not making a conscious effort to reach out to nature through the sense organs and bring back an experience. We are simply with the woods, the birds, the beautiful green leaves freshly bathed with the rains, with the mild sun rays dancing on them. We are there without barriers, resistance of any kind, and we may be aware that being, communing with nature does something to the whole being. It is a happening. We are not seeking, we are not reaching out, acquiring, but something is being bestowed, something enters, touches each of us at all levels.

When we look at the sunshine in motiveless innocence, the very perception of the sunshine does something to us. When we look at the ocean or the dancing waters of the mountain stream or stand beside a magnificently flowing river, the perception of the waters brings about change physically, psychologically, psychically.

To look at a tree, not analyzing it botanically, not naming it, evaluating it, considering how to make use of it, but just looking at its beauty, grandeur, sensing the moment of communion, has healing power. To be with space without the desire to use the sense organs, the eyes to see an object and bring something back, but simply remain with space, releases the energies contained in space.

Being with nature in the relaxation of wholeness, in innocence, is a happening not an experience. In total relaxation, the being is open to receive, not in a calculated way of designs and schemes, waiting for predetermined experiences to take place, but in the humility that the cessation of wanting, asserting, controlling brings.

In total relaxation, the ego no longer moves and the artificial separation of the me and the not me kept active by the ego has no scope to function. Denuded of all the roles, the acclaim of society, the desire to become, the being is

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receptive, innocent, sensitive and free to commune with all of nature.

LEARNING FROM NATURE

Our primary responsibility as members of the earth's family is to understand deeply our organic relationship with all of nature and to live that relationship profoundly. If we see for ourselves how foolish it is to create artificial environments, exploit nature to maintain these environments, and adopt a superficial, arrogant attitude to the other beings who haven't evolved to plastic, machines, gadgets and cement, then our intelligence, sensitivity is awakened and right actions will follow.

To enhance our understanding of who essentially we are, not who we intellectually wished we were, we need to learn from nature in the humility of innocence. If we recognize that we have been falsely educated by society about the nature of reality, then we are responsible for discovering for ourselves the essence of this world in which we live.

We have been raised in modern societies to believe that happiness derives from material progress and products in ever-increasing abundance and variety, that success is in superiority, material and psychological, that security is in accumulation of defensive and aggressive weapons. We are being forced to suspect that there is something essentially false in this learned formula for success and that to survive at all, let alone happily, we will need to discover anew the fundamental necessities for decent living.

Because the times force an urgency on our investigations, we will need to work on several levels at once. We will need to take immediate corrective measures to reverse the worst of the damage we have done to the earth and its creatures, to turn the tide of destructive policies, and

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actions. We must place legal limits, apply the force of public pressure to arrest the greed, power-hungry insanity of modern man before the lands and creatures are entirely ravished. We must alter the economic structures, adopt a new ethics with recognition of the rights of humans, other animals, the future beings, the land, and frame new legislation to protect at least the most endangered from ruin or extinction. But none of these actions will be effective, has a chance for long-range success, if human beings have not learned to put into abeyance ego-centered, selfish motives relative to the environment and discovered how to live in harmony, oneness, peace.

As long as the human being utilizes the special capabilities, the evolved consciousness that is his or her birthright for ego-centered, selfish ends, every creature, every being on the earth is in potential danger of unfortunate consequences. As long as we continue to live encapsulated in material, fragmentary, artificially limited views of the world, we will restrict the growth and evolutionary possibilities of all beings.

Our understanding of living must move from the superficial layers of intellectual, materialistic fixation to appreciation of wholeness. We need not only to conceive new ways of living in harmony with nature, we must be capable of living the lifestyles we invent, and that we cannot do, if we maintain a distorted view of reality.

If we tenderly love this earth which we address as mother, we will move our lives away from the pettiness of ego-centred selfish living, from ceaseless grasping of whatever we desire and move into the gentle rhythms of receiving and responding. Do we realize how essentially different responding is from reacting and asserting? Spontaneous responsiveness is not of the ego, but comes with attentiveness, sensitivity, communion. It is choiceless, not at all contrived, calculated. When we live in communion

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with the beings, the earth, we become very sensitive to balance, wholeness and right action flows spontaneously.

We must ask ourselves sincerely if we have the humility to learn from the other creatures, to be receptive to their communications or whether we are perpetually anxious to assert our supremacy, our mastery. We need to discover whether we will allow our organisms to relax totally, to be open to the healing forces in nature or if we will be forever in bondage to the whims, schemes of the intellect? We must find out if we are willing to free ourselves even momentarily from the human-made to be in wholeness?

The relationship with the earth, the plants, the animals and with the sun, moon, planets is vital to us. We cannot ignore these relationships and call ourselves human beings. If we emphasize only relationships with our fellow human beings and with human-made things, we miss the beauty of this sacred event of living, we miss our opportunity to learn from, communicate with the natural world.

The trees, the rocks, the rivers have their individualities, their feels, their ways of communicating with us if we care to listen. They will have a dialogue with us if we are sensitive enough to communicate with them. They each have an existential eloquence that requires great attentiveness to appreciate. The oceans, the rivers have their own tunes, notes, tones as do the rocks, the birds, the trees. If we listen to the sounds of the ocean, the ripples on a lake, the waves of a flowing river, we will become aware of the individuality expressed in sound waves, in light waves, in the solidity or nebulousness or fluidity.

If we are attentive to the mountains in Norway, the Alps in Switzerland, the Himalayas in India, we will discover that each has different expressions, each has something different to say. They want to be in relationship with us. They do not assert or impose; they are not dogmatic.

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Relationship involves the rhythms of receptivity and choiceless responsiveness: true relationship transcends any consideration of doing something for another. When the heartbeat of the earth is as intimate to us as the heartbeat of the body, we will act spontaneously to preserve the earth just as we do to protect the body. When the earth is in danger, we will respond immediately without any sense of doing something special, providing some extraordinary service, just as we now do when the body is in danger.

It is the profound merging of the heartbeat, rhythms, pulses, flow of blood of the human and non-human that will preserve the sanctity of the earth. The social, legislative compulsions are important, the education of people to the damages they are perpetrating is significant, but it is only when the illusion of separation of the human and non-human is shattered once and for all that the earth and all the creatures will be out of danger from human aggressiveness, callousness, carelessness.

Oneness with the earth creates fearlessness. It is only when we are living apart from the earth in artificial structures, sustained only by manmade products and secondhand ideas, that we have reason to fear for our security. Closeness to the earth and the beings of the earth brings profound acceptance of living and dying. When we look at birth as the beginning of death and death as the beginning of new birth, there is no fear. Birth and death lose the tension of opposition, become part of the rhythm of life. Birth, growth, decay and death lose the fear of uncertainty, become the natural cycle through which life moves.

Living artificial lives, we like to believe that though everything around us is changing, being born, growing, dying, that we are independent of all that, that in our identities we are permanent, impervious to the forces of change.

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Only when we move close to nature is it possible for us to see life as a total movement forever renewing itself. Life is ever new, ever fresh, ever changing, ever moving. We see the rivers flowing, the trees growing, the flowers blooming, the waves curling on the sea, and we become aware that the movements of life are never stale; life never repeats itself. Snow falling in winter is never a stale repetition of the snows of the last winter.

We try to arrest this vast life in the concepts of the intellect, but our attempts are sad failures. The pathetic consequence of these hopeless attempts is a pervasive fear of living, a terror of dying, and ridiculous inability to be fully present in the moment so that whatever beauty, whatever thrill nature is ready to bestow is tragically ignored or debased.

We may go to a magnificent seashore and, for the first two or three days, become exhilarated by the grandeur of the ocean, the clouds, the birds, the sunset, but after a few days we get used to the surroundings and the habit structures, the conditioned ways of behaving, the reactions of knowledge and experience come into play, and we lose the living relationship with all that is ready to communicate with us, rejuvenate and refresh us.

Living in communion with nature, remaining in vital relationship with the sourroundings requires awareness of all the artificial barriers we create in the intellectual, emotional, habitual levels of our beings. Communion means staying in direct awareness of birth, growth, decay, death without any resistance, any psychological separation at all. Without resistance, barriers, we are ready to learn, to mature, to become transformed.

Nature is prepared to teach us how to live simply, elegantly, harmoniously according to vibrant rhythms, but we must be willing to denude ourselves of the elaborate trappings of society and even allow to go into abeyance when

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not necessary all the theories, organized information, emotional preferences that we have collected. We cannot receive, learn from nature if we are filled with thoughts, sentiments, ambitions.

MATURING TO AUTHENTICITY

Living our organic relationship with nature, learning from nature enables us to lead authentic lives, which is critical for meeting our responsibility to the earth. No one will listen seriously to our declarations of concern, of love for the land and for all the creatures if we are not exemplars of oneness with nature, if our lives lack the authenticity of love.

Just as we are profoundly concerned about the well being of the creatures of the earth, all the beings of the earth - stones, clay, waters are all beings because they have consciousness - let us be concerned about what we do with our lives. We cannot go to the deepest levels of concern, which is compassion, if we lead superficial lives. We cannot communicate, learn from and be responsive to the natural world if we have the arrogance of prestigious, ambitious, learned lives. We cannot vibrate with sincere love for nature if our lives do not flow with the rhythms, with the harmonies, if our relationships are not peaceful.

If our lives have the fragrance of communion with nature, then whatever ecological work we undertake will have an authenticity about it; our lives will carry the message. We will not bring sanity back to the earth offering ideas only; we must offer the beauty of lives that vibrate wholeness, oneness with all the beings.

Some committed to deep ecology will have the preparation, capacity to work on an international level in a leadership role, others will devote themselves to education, still others will prefer to initiate projects at the community level. But whatever the level of involvement, let the authenticity of

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the lives, the deep understanding that comes from communion, intimate relationship, sensitive awareness be present in all those who undertake the work. And let there be pervasive humility that recognizes that no matter how vast our intellectual understanding of ecology, the forces that we are cooperating with, working with, in nature are of a much vaster intelligence. We need to be careful not to rush in with intellectual solutions until we have communed, reached to deeper layers for holistic solutions.

Intellectual understanding is important and we will take help of it as far as it will carry us, but we must recognize that there are other ways of knowing, that there is holistic intelligence within each person that needs to be activated to make total action, spontaneous responsiveness possible. If we are identified with our intellectual understanding, degrees, credentials or if we live chaotic, unbalanced lives, we will not be sensitive to the movement of intelligence within each of us.

Let us carry out the vitally important work of deep ecology from the right foundation of our lives so that the endeavors are free from any taint of hypocrisy and the vibration, the fragrance of our lives supports the work we are doing. Whether we are in a village helping the people solve their energy needs or we are in the capitals of developed countries putting pressure on politicians, industralists, let our lives grow with the authenticity of a more profound, essential, harmonious way of living.

Let us make sure we don't live the hypocrisy of operating on one set of values for the external environment and a quite different set for our internal environment. If purity is to be preserved in our surroundings, it must also be maintained in each of our bodies. It is useless to fight pollution of the cities and at the same time pollute our bodies with highly processed food, self-destructive habits, drugs, intoxicants. And it is utter hypocrisy to protect some creatures

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while we cooperate in the cruel deaths of others to satisfy sophisticated tastes.

Those of us who have genuine tender regard for the planet will lead voluntarily simple lives, caring for our bodies with the same attentiveness as caring for the environment. love of the earth and all its beings will naturally lead us to simple harmonious living based on an integrated set of values. But we cannot achieve this simple way of living unless we willingly give up our attachments to the recognition, comforts, material security of conditioned society. We cannot identify with the conditioned and expect the unconditioned, the unpolluted to release its perfume in our lives.

DISCOVERING HOLISTIC ACTIONS

Finding ways to put understanding of the needs of the earth and the creatures into positive actions will depend in part on our individual capacities and inclinations. Some of us are prepared to deal directly with problems of pollution, of soil and resource depletion; others are equipped to press for social and legislative reform; and still others are best suited to render quiet but necessary support to the more visible efforts of other activists. Whatever our capacities, we can all share in educating, informing people about the realities of earth's environment.

Societies in various places and forms have tried for centuries to force people to change and have to some extent succeeded in constraining certain behaviors, but they have not succeeded in prompting understanding, growth, maturity. Compulsion alone does not create permanent change. For lasting, significant change to occur understanding must move to deep layers of the being.

Clearly, we must move to deeper understanding of the complexities of ecology. Those trained as ecologists should take the lead. They can help us learn that conservation is not

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a matter of enlightened self-interest but of community good, that land is not inert soil but an energy unit in the biosphere or biotic pyramid. They can clarify for us the complex relationships that hold in an ecosystem.

But these educational tasks do not belong to the ecologists alone. We must all contribute. We must see that the concepts and principles of ecology are not taught in special classes but are incorporated into instruction in history, economics, politics, science, philosophy, language. And we must train ourselves and others to understand and accept our ethical obligations to the environment, to be genuinely responsible biotic citizens of planet earth.

While some of us are engaged in international programs for preserving species, eliminating pollution, restoring local ecosystems, or in educating people to the dangers of current practices, some of us will need to take up simple lives in villages and communities where we can help create solutions to local problems through appropriate use of science and technology and educate the people through the beauty of lives in harmony with nature. It is not only the large searchlights that illumine the planet, but it is also the candles of the small lives shining with pure radiance.

Some individuals may help establish small communities in which sensitive people can live in harmony with the surroundings and investigate ways of livelihood which do not cooperate with the exploitation of large corporations, industries, government institutions. Whatever is discovered in one community will provide encouragement for the establishment of other communities and eventually Gandhi's dream of a planet of small villages in which the highly centralized forms of industry, government, military atrophy may become a reality.

Such communities will not survive on the basis of ideals alone. They cannot be refuges for people who want to isolate

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themselves from the flow of life. These communities must be vital places for true revolutionaries who yearn for another way of living and are willing to commit their life blood to make peaceful, harmonious living possible.

Members of these communities must learn to live together without conflict, indifference polluting the atmosphere. They may build lovely houses with their hands, care tenderly for certain animals, have beautiful gardens, but become bewildered about how to care for each other, how to support, help each other grow, mature, how to come together for decision-making, hold discussions, express differences in a decent way. If we do not have the emotional maturity to live together, to be related in wisdom, soon all the disorder, the pettiness of city life will be transferred to our community and it will be no more peaceful than an urban neighborhood.

We must be careful not to spoil these beautiful community experiments, set in natural surroundings, by petty self-indulgence. These communities, leading as they will the way to development of alternative lifestyles, are the light of the future. The cities are decaying, disintegrating, no longer capable of supporting life at any hopeful level: they will disappear, rot away. If the communities are alive with the vitality of healthful, sane peaceful living, they will make possible an evolution out of urban madness to whole living in nature.

The communities that lead the people toward evolved simple living must have a deep ecological commitment and must be guided by the authenticity of beings who sincerely, deeply, profoundly live that commitment. They will provide the living evidence that human beings can live in peace, in harmony with nature. Without the living truth of such committed lives in communion with oneness, we are only playing with theories, with hypothetical thinking.

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The combined force of legislation, public pressure, education of the people, and authentic lives sustained by wholeness and permeated with the fearlessness of oneness with all beings is powerful and equal to the challenges that are facing the planet.

Let us meet these challenges with the whole of our beings firmly rooted in the earth, in tune with the unpolluted rhythms, the undistorted harmonies, the unconditioned intelligence. Let us have the humility to recognize that it is not our intellects alone that will lead us out of darkness: the challenges are too complex for the limited scope of the brain, the intellect. It is only by moving to a deeper layer where communion, sensitivity, responsiveness flower and by growing totally that we will have the maturity, be capable of the precise attentiveness to all the complex interrelatedness that is wholeness, that we will become equal to the challenges.

Those of us who live in compassion, communion and oneness with all beings will radiate the light of love for the earth wherever we are. Some of us will take on highly visible public work with governments and organizations and others of us will engage in the quiet work in villages and communities. But the radiance, the awareness of oneness will unite all of us in a warm, intense light which surrounds the globe. We have the blessing of the earth.

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Nurturing the Young

Children of today like children of every preceding generation are innately wise, creative, talented, capable. This generation of children has, however, a distinct advantage over its predecessors, for parents and educators, as well as many other serious-minded people, have begun to recognize that traditional forms of education fail to guide children to full realization of their capacities. This recognition has prompted fresh, holistic ways of thinking about, and planning educational programs.

There is growing hope that today's children and future generations of children will receive an education that helps them to develop into complete human beings, helps them to lead harmonious lives that are attuned to the totality of life.

This new education will be a welcome change from that now offered by society. Children will no longer be educated to become resources for the military, industrial, political, and religious establishments. They will not be conditioned to accept unquestionally the values of the establishment, to relinguish freedom at an early age, to be distorted by fear, anxiety, insecurity. And they will not be educated in just that narrow range of skills, abilities, values of use to the establishment, but will have ample opportunity to flower freely into whole, healthy lives.

Until now, the education of the whole child has been of no use to the dominant culture; a fully alive capable human being is seen as a threat to the status quo.

If a young person sincerely, seriously thinks, feels, acts differently from the accepted norm, he or she is a danger, a

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small, sharp force penetrating into the secure wall of the accepted ways of being in the culture. Society tolerates a certain amount of deviant behavior, mild forms of creativity, but a truly original child who does not want to sacrifice wholeness at the altar of prestige, respectability, comfort is not acceptable.

From the earliest years young persons must relinquish the wholeness which is their birthright and accept the fragments of society, the lopsided growth, the reliance on symbols as ways of knowing rather than intuition or direct perception of what is real. The children are gradually moved from innate intelligence, immediate perception of reality, creative expression to dependence on the symbols of the culture, the intellectual operations of the society.

Because we have carelessly allowed education to become the instrument of governments for producing citizens who will be subservient to the needs of the state, we have yet to see on any significant scale, the birth and total growth of a whole human being, one capable of living in peace, harmony, oneness. By making it convenient to abandon responsibility for what takes place within the walls of the schools, and to carelessly entrust our young people to these institutions, we have collectively agreed to the development of citizens who value aggressiveness, defensiveness, competition, acquisition without consideration for the consequences to the ecosystem, violence in the name of national interests, satisfaction of personal needs, interests regardless of the damage to other beings. These young people molded by the institutions of education have little hope of living in peace, harmony, sanity.

RECOGNIZING CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

The focus of the current educational institutions is to emphasize separateness, each individual in competition with

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others, and to diminish the sense of unity, oneness that is the natural heritage of the young child. The child is systematically taught that he or she is psychologically a separate entity who must struggle for survival in strong competition with other beings.

The child not only is educated to be psychologically separate and to protect that separateness with elaborate defense structures, but is removed from the immediate organic relationship with all beings, with nature and required to devote full attention to the symbol systems of society. In learning the symbol systems, the child also learns to continue the movement of the past, to be repetitive according to the established patterns of academic tradition. A child must, of course, learn the symbol systems of the dominant culture, but not in the unbalanced, artificial, exclusive way of present educational systems.

It is unfortunate but true, that becoming educated for the child is being uprooted from the natural environment, from intuitive ways of knowing, from the joys of direct contact with nature, with fellow creatures. It is not necessary that education uproot the child; it is possible to introduce the child to the particular details of the symbol systems in the context of the whole of living, but we have not found it important enough to preserve, enhance the wholeness of the child.

The tension of being separate, having to compete for approval, being in an unbalanced state uprooted from organic relationships, undermines the natural vitality, brilliance of the child, and he or she gradually becomes as dull, neurotic as the rest of society.

If education does nothing else, it must preserve the joy of living, the sense of oneness, the intimate relationship with all beings that is the natural heritage of all humans. And it must maintain the dignity of the young person, who essentially is not an inefficient processor of information, but is a being who shares creativity, intelligence, love with all the universe.

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As parents, educators, members of societies, do we really know what a child is? Or do we simply assume that a child is a possession for us to mold into our preconceived images, to be made a carbon copy of existing lives? Do we realize at all that a child is born of wholeness, exists in wholeness and has some innate expression quite apart from our individual or collective designs? We adults have not discovered what life is, what reality is, what harmonious relationship is, yet we are quick to mold the child in our ignorance.

Let us be honest with ourselves. Just as we do not know how to live in peace, in sanity, ourselves, we do not know how to raise, educate children who will lead peaceful, sane, harmonious lives. We have by no means created a beautiful society for the young, yet we seek to pass it on to them as a glorious heritage.

Let us not feel confident that educating the young to continue the past is a marvelous endeavor; it is not. In fact the alert young people of today question whether there will be any future for them at all.

Everywhere there are indicators that our arrogance and ignorance, our callousness toward life and living creatures are likely to bring our doom. The overpopulation, pollution, indifference to ecosystems, exploitation of resources, investment in nuclear solutions all contribute to unpleasant predictions about the life span of humans on this earth. There is neither time nor tolerance for more mistakes, carelessness, inattentiveness in raising and educating the young. If the new generation cannot do better than we have done, if it cannot live simply, harmoniously, peacefully, then the predictions for failure of the human race will prove valid.

EXPLORING HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Not only parents, educators, but anyone who cares about the quality of living for human beings and who loves

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the earth needs to give profound attention to raising and educating the young. We have no more tolerance left on this planet for insane, self-indulgent, callous living.

Those of us who would not like to participate, cooperate in destroying the balance, unity of the child, will need to become active voices wherever we are for a new, holistic education that preserves the sanctity of the child, respects the wholeness and places the intellectual in balance with other ways of knowing, being.

We must help the young develop a new perspective of total human life - not the fragmentary, compartmentalized life of our unfortunate present societies - a holistic perspective of the total resources available on the globe, a sense of unity with the global human family. If we continue to educate the child to limited, narrow identification with a particular community which is at odds with other communities over issues of resources, power, ownership of truth, then we will reap the harvest of division, aggressiveness, wars. We cannot force children to accept parochial labels, to defend the traditions of a particular subgroup and expect them to lead the world to global peace and harmony.

Education of the generation that must function as a global human family needs to transcend the boundaries of race, religion, creed, nation to include recognition of the oneness of all beings. This is not to say that a child cannot be taught the traditions, rituals of a culture in a nondogmatic way, but the children who will live in a global human family will need to understand at a profound level that there is unity in diversity, that differences need not divide, that all cultural distinctions are at a surface level and at a deep level we are essentially, everlastingly inseparable.

Are we prepared to face the fact that if we want a holistic education for our children that will make it possible for them to live in joyous harmony without the ugliness of an ego-

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centered existence, parochial attachments, devastating conflicts, we will have to grow with the children?

As parents, teachers, serious-minded citizens we will need to go deeper into our own lives, discover the essence of living, discover the true values, priorities of living. Education for these complex times of intellectual sophistication, scientific, technical advances cannot stay on a surface level. At the superficial layers, we are in chaos, we've lost our moorings; we must plunge deeper to discover a reality which is essentially in harmony, peace, unity.

We must rediscover wholeness in our own lives and truly value wholeness for the child, not as a romantic notion, but as a practical necessity for survival of human beings on the planet. We cannot expect much for the human race if we raise even one more generation in the madness of fragmentation, lopsided growth, unbalanced living.

If we take on the challenge of holistic education, let us be serious about the total growth of the child and not indulge in anti-intellectual fads which produce imbalanced growth of another kind or reduce ourselves to sloppy sentimentalism about the natural child and absolve ourselves of responsibility for the careful, attentive raising and educating of each young being. Ignorance, illiteracy, following of fads, do not inspire the total growth of the child. To say that a child can learn from a plant, a flower is not to say that a child does not learn important things from books as well.

Holistic education is focused on the total growth of all the faculties, talents, potential abilities of the child, who rooted in the organic relationships of the natural world, will express himself or herself in language, the arts, science, mathematics, agriculture, ecology, crafts. Total growth means being at home with all the movements, rhythms of natural living, so that the child is as comfortable with silence as with sound, with darkness as with light, with sorrow as well as joy.

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Total growth also means being as familiar with the inner dimensions of the mind, feelings, emotions, understanding their dynamics, their ways of emerging from subtle feelings to full-blown reactions, so that the terrific momentum of jealousy, anger, fear do not take children by surprise and completely overwhelm their equipoise. And it means that the needs of the body will not be neglected in total education; the child will learn how to keep the body sensitive, alert, fine tuned so that it cooperates, rather than is antagonistic with the total being.

Although holistic education will have many aspects and many expressions, its foundation, its context will remain constant: living, learning cannot be disassociated from wholeness; talents, capabilities need not be ego-centered and can develop as a resource for enhancement of the culture, out of concern for the upliftment of the people. The child develops and expresses talents and abilities not to compete against other children, not to aggrandize the self, but to make a socially-responsible, creative contribution in freedom to society. Holistic education will not aim to produce a few highly talented, superior individuals who will assume prestigious jobs, but to unfold the unique contribution of each person.

Holistic education recognizes that total growth if it is to have any meaning at all must respect the innate freedom of the child. Growth through compulsion does not result in maturity, only in conditioning, psychological slavery. Yet the child must be helped to realize that freedom is not self-centered indulgence, licentiousness, but implies a deeper, more profound responsibility than does conditioned compulsions, acceptance of authority.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

When we establish holistic education, parents will no longer raise children according to traditional norms and then

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expect the schools to educate the children to freedom. The total growth of the child in freedom must begin with a radically different approach by parents. Parents will need to realize the sanctity of parenthood, the sacredness of letting a child be born of the flesh and blood of the parents. It is a sacred responsibility to raise a child without casting a shadow upon the child's face or life.

If the parents respect the human being they are going to bring into the world; if they respect the freedom, the growth of this human being, they will not view the conception of the child as giving pleasure to the mother and father, but as a responsibility toward the world, toward the human family.

We must realize that children are not means for the fulfillment of the ambitions, wishes, desires of the parents. Each child is a unique being who contains a physical and psychological inheritance but also transcends this inheritance. In the tiny body of the child, a whole human being exists. The child is not simply a miniature version of the parents, but is unique.

To live in intimacy with the tiny child, to recognize the physical similarities and yet to respect the uniqueness, wholeness of the child requires alert sensitivity by both parents. It is easy to lapse into traditional patterns of parenting based on ownership, fulfillment of ambitions, desire to mold the child into a replica of oneself. But parents who value the freedom, the sanctity of the life of the child will not fall prey to easy repetition of the past, but will be attentive to preserving the specialness of the child.

We must realize that raising, educating the child begins with conception. The quality of a child's consciousness is determined to a great extent by the behavior of the parents at the moment of conception. If even one of the parents is in a state of anger, aggression, hatred, revengefulness,

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boredom, then the consciousness of the infant will be contaminated by these tendencies. The infant will be born with congenital mental deficiencies, distortions, which will be difficult for him or her to overcome.

The child from conception until about the age of five absorbs and assimilates at a terrific speed, not only outward behavior, but attitudes and tendencies. Even before the young person learns language, he or she intuitively understands the moods and feelings which are being expressed. And if the moods are harsh, strong, callous, then the tender psyche of the child can be damaged and healing the damage as the child grows will be difficult.

The child from very early on is sensitive to what is being said in his or her presence. If the parents express disapproval, rejection, offer comparison to other children, it will make an impression on the child's psyche even if he or she does not understand the words that are spoken.

The child at a young age has not yet developed a psychological defense system and is very vulnerable to the atmosphere in which he or she is raised. Therefore the parents must be careful not to expose the young person to the distortions of the adult world. From conception, the whole being is learning, absorbing and the parents must be alert not to indulge in excessive moods, irritations, clashes which will disturb the tenderness of the child.

Even putting labels on pre-verbal children will have an effect. To say, for example, that children are too dark or too light, that their noses are too big - all the various descriptions we put on children - will have a subtle affect in the psyche, and create a conditioning. We must care about the quality of communication we have with the young person. Even if he or she does not listen or respond in words, the whole being is absorbing, assimilating, feeling intensely.

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If we care deeply that the children grow as sane, healthy, whole beings, we'll give precise attention to the atmosphere in the home. We'll see that the child is protected from harsh displays of temper, and we'll avoid heavily conditioning the young person with our expectations, goals, fears.

If we have a fear of living, if we have unnatural fear for the safety of the child, he or she will grow with fear stamped on the psyche. We need to learn while raising, educating a young person to observe very closely our fears, insecurities, to be attentive to our anxieties about living and dying so that we do not carelessly distort the life of the child. We are not saints; we are not perfect as parents and educators, but we can take responsibility for being attentive to how we are conditioning the young person with our distortions. If we are truly attentive and aware of our own behavior, many of the careless actions will be revealed in the searchlight of attentiveness.

We cannot proceed on a habitual, automatic basis in raising and educating the child if we respect the freedom and sanctity of the child. The habitual behaviors which may reflect how we were raised will be imprinted on the consciousness of the young person and will form the beginnings of a similar habit structure that is neither desirable from the parents' point of view nor positive for the child. We may transmit habits that we are unaware we possess and then dislike these when they appear in the child's behavior.

Living harmoniously as a family unit requires daily rhythms if order is to prevail. The child must learn to cooperate with these rhythms, washing, eating, going to bed accordingly. But there is a tremendous difference between being sensitive to the movement of the day and following a rigid pattern by compulsion. As we teach the child to eat, bathe, wash the teeth, we must help the child not go through

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these actions automatically, but with sensitivity to the sensations, perceptions, rhythms.

If the home is vibrating with the urge to live harmoniously, peacefully, to participate seriously in the global human family, to work for upliftment of oppressed people, then concerns beyond the limitations of self-centered activity will seem natural for the child. If the family recognizes that a human being is not born merely to gratify the physical, biological needs and psychological ambitions, then the young person will grow with an expansive world view that transcends the limited field of the ego.

If the parents are not living in isolation of self-centeredness, but are living with awareness of civic responsibility toward the world, a sense of concern for all beings, they will easily and naturally share their views with the the child. Through these discussions the child spontaneously learns the attitude of responsibility and the sincere feel of participation that comes with civic responsibility.

Most of us, unfortunately, lead self-centered lives in which rights, pleasures, personal gratifications are much more important than responsibilities as citizens of the world. And it is no use at all pretending to be responsible for the sake of the child; he or she is watching all the time the actual behavior of the elders, not only the words, but the actions and feelings. The child will know how we actually treat members of another culture, community, class, religion. It is no use making strong speeches about the oneness of all, the need for brotherhood, sisterhood if a person of low economic status, prestige in society visits the home and is received as a second-class citizen.

When we bring a child into the home, we have to grow out of self-centeredness, and become much more aware of our hypocrises. The child knows when we say one thing, do

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another, and feel something entirely different. And if we are sensitive to the expressions of the child, we will see that we do not fool these observant creatures with our elaborate pretenses.

When a child comes into the home, we usually give some thought to what kind of future will be available as the child matures. And in these critial times, the concern has serious proportions.

We can no longer have the exclusive view that we will each raise our children with love and concern and let the rest of the world take care of itself. If we truly love the children, we will take responsibility for the environment, the economic conditions, the international situation that will be the home and family in which the young generation must live.

It is a joy to see that organizations of mothers and parents are coming forth to make collective statements marching in th streets for peace. It indicates that real love for the young is not dead. Although the family structures, the patterns of raising the young have altered drastically, and we have anxieties about the survival of the family at all in the developed, affluent countries, yet the deep, profound, primal love of the parent for the child has not disintegrated.

Even with the tenderness of affection alive in our hearts, we'll have to be extremely careful not only about the atmosphere, the attitudes in the home, but also about the process we use to educate the child. When we send the children to school, we cannot simply dump them into a day care center or a nearby school and feel that our responsibility is over, as if we were shepherds who sleep when the sheep are in the fold. As parents we have continuous responsibility for the education of our children; educators can cooperate with us, but we must provide the commitment, the pervasive interest that continues with the child as he or she is involved with various teachers, schools, curricula.

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Inevitably parents must face the decision of sending a child to the nearest available government school, private school, starting a school with other parents, or educating the child at home. This decision is a very serious one with significant implications for the life of the young person and the family.

Parents who are sensitive at all will question sending a child to an institution with an entirely different set of operational values than those of the home. They will resist entering a child in a factory-like establishment that will enfold the child in the theories, ideas, norms of the dominant society and produce a citizen who is ready to take a job in the exploitative economic establishment, is in passive agreement with the nationalistic, imperialistic aspirations of the government, and who is willing to go to war for the corrupt interests of the military, political, industrial complex of the nation. Parents will seriously consider whether to send the child into an educational situation where wholeness, creativity, life itself are not valued, not given priority.

In modern societies, we lead rushed lives and hardly ever have extended time for the serious issues of living, but we must pause and give serious atention to how we will educate the young. We must decide what priority to give education and not let this decision be an automatic reaction to do what is easy, as we do with thousands of other decisions in our lives.

Let us not, as parents, educators, friends, approach the opportunities for educating the young as a logistical nuisance of enrolling our children in the most convenient school; instead let us value these opportunities as ones for contributing to the development of more highly-evolved human beings who will utilize their heritage of love, creativity, intelligence to transform society.

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Education is a lovely challenge if we view it as an opportunity for mutual growth, for sharing, cooperation, participation in the emergence of human beings who more fully realize the potential for living joyfully, profoundly. If we consider education as a sacred responsibility for all of society, then we will transcend the limited view of parents looking for the closest school and move to the wider perspective of preparing citizens for a radically different society, culture, way of living.

Taking education seriously, means becoming willing to be personally involved in the process of working with a school which values the wholeness of the child (if such schools exist), cooperating with other parents to form new schools and participating in their development, or finding some other pattern of education suitable to the local situation. A serious approach to education does not mean simply choosing the best of the presently available means for education, since even the current best may do enormous damage to the sensitive child.

FOUNDING SCHOOLS FOR PEACE

When we investigate the available means for educating a young person, we are bound to be discouraged by what we find. But is it not more worthy of us as capable human beings to organize another way of education than to become deeply discouraged, depressed that we are sending a loved young one to a school we cannot fully respect?

The depressing effect of sending a child to a marginally acceptable school will be with the family for the full time of the child's education, years and years. Every week there will be new incidents that discourage the family further. Is it not better to take up the challenge when it first arises, to take decent, intelligent, courageous action to create a school to which we will be proud to send a tender young person?

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Parents, educators, friends will need to come together, cooperate, to make sincere commitments to creating schools in which whole human beings can breathe, feel at ease, learn in harmony. It is not the responsibility of the parents only. The parents with young children of school age may be the catalyst, but the rest of the community must participate, feel responsible for providing worthy education for the young generation.

Creating a new school, a new form of education will require considerable discussion among all those involved, particularly about the fundamental values on which the education is to be based. Such discussions might include the negative effects of competitiveness, the danger of alienation in comparing one child with another, the damage of judging, evaluating in undermining the confidence of the child. All these issues will need to be explored in considerable detail so that those who become the educators in the new school do not lapse into traditional patterns out of careless, automatic behavior.

All involved in the school will need to explore at a deep level what wholeness, oneness, uniqueness, freedom mean in all aspects of education; all the implications of these powerful realities will have to be investigated so that they aren't reduced to superficial slogans which have no real meaning for the day-to-day operation of the school, the classes.

If wholeness, oneness, uniqueness, freedom are to give their fragrance, vibration to the school, then they must permeate every activity, each relationship. A child cannot be respected as a whole in the arts class, and then treated only as an intellectual fragment in the mathematics class. The perspective of wholeness must permeate every lesson if it is to come alive fully; even if the lesson is focused on a detail of mathematical operations, the child should understand the relevance to the totality of living.

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And the group that comes together to found a school, a new way of educating young people will need to consider fully what it means to live successfully as a member of a global human family. If the founders are serious about preparing the young people for the reality they will encounter in this modern world, where science and technology have brought all the peoples of the planet in vital communication with one another, then they will plan a school which is not isolated from the rest of the community, which does not encourage apartness, alienation. Instead they will give emphasis to the understandings and skills necessary to relate harmoniously with all members of the community, and to respect, communicate well with peoples of other communities, even distant ones.

Such a school will not have distinct boundaries or barriers which create an exclusive atmosphere, but there will be a vibrant flow in and out of the school bringing visitors in and arranging for students to move freely in the community, learning from the environment, the wise people, the wealth of resources. In a school that prepares the young people to be citizens of the globe, there will be strong emphasis on being a responsible citizen, caring for the planet and all its beings.

The philosophy will not be to simply take from the environment, to rob the resources that one needs for personal pleasures and ambitions, but to be in a healthy, affectionate, tender relationship with the earth that nourishes and heals. From an early age the young people will be active citizens, contributing to the community, helping to meet the local needs. If such a contribution includes manual labor and encourages respect for manual labor, all the better.

The curriculum of a school dedicated to education for peace, social responsibility must be alive, charged with the immediacy of challenges of the moment. It cannot be the dead

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repetition of the traditional subject matter, which leads to lopsided growth and unnatural emphasis on limited academic, analytical, intellectual skills and theories.

A curriculum for peace must not be ego-centered, creating compulsions for the young person to acquire knowledge and experience for personal enhancement, to build an arsenal of theories in order to feel superior, well-defended. Emphasizing personal gain through ownership of knowledge, acquiring more ideas faster than others has nothing to do with education, learning. Education is not grasping ideas in a compulsive way, storing them securely in memory, displaying them on demand to receive the rewards of social recognition.

Education to have any meaning at all must result in the total growth, understanding of the young person. Education for peace means that the young people learn how to live decently, harmoniously, precisely, using their talents and abilities, not solely for personal gain, but for the upliftment of humanity. The intellect must be trained but in proportion to all other learning and not from an ego-centered, divisive perspective.

PLANNING THE NEW CURRICULUM

We see in today's society, the logical conclusion of training young people to compete in the ownership of ideas, academic skill, and we cannot deny that the stench of self-centered consciousness has polluted society, made ugly, miserable individual and collective lives. We have come to the end of ego-centered living; there is no more tolerance for considering only the self and endlessly competing with others. Only a little more of self-centered living, and we will all be destroyed.

To help young people understand the dangers of ego-centered living, it's important that they be introduced to the study of the dynamics of mind and emotions; through insight

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into the workings of the intellectual and psychological structures, the young person is freed from the potential tyranny of these structures. If the child learns the chemistry of emotions while learning the chemistry of organic or inorganic matter, he or she will not be overwhelmed by upsurges of anger, jealousy, fear.

An unaware child is forced into automatic reactions when strong emotions occur - because he or she is ignorant of the dynamics of the emotion within the being - and violent reactions are there, relationships are spoiled before there is any awareness of what is happening. If the child is alert to the first movements of emotion in the body, is familiar with how the emotion travels through the body, how it alters perception and judgment, he or she is free of automatic, careless reactions and has much more potential for harmonious relationships.

To help the child understand the workings of the mind and the play of emotions is not to suppress, control their operation, but is to release the light of understanding and reveal significant aspects of living that are traditionally kept in the dark.

It is highly undesirable that we continue to feed huge amounts of information into a brain, mind that we do not understand at all. If a child is given the opportunity from an early age to observe the operation of the mind, the intellect, he or she has a much greater potential for transcending the limitations of intellect and growing into a creative, highly intelligent, not merely intellectually clever, human being.

Children are naturally observant, so it is not difficult to develop attentiveness, awareness of the inner and the outer life; it will not be difficult to help the child to be aware simultaneously of the outward and inward movements and to be free of automatic reactions.

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We have all seen children looking innocently at the rainbow, the clouds, the raindrops, at a sparrow, a parrot, at flowers. The child looks with the whole body, not only with the eyes, as if the whole universe were condensed in the flower, the bud. In childhood there is the capacity to look innocently without wanting anything from the object.

Attentive, innocent observation is learning in its most direct form. If the child sees for himself, herself the fact, the reality of existence, then the theories, ideas of society are in a context of what the child has discovered directly, personally, firsthand through immediate perception. Activating the force of observation leads to intelligence far more powerful and live than the intellectual sophistication that comes from endless repetition of ideas, committed to memory and stored for recall in standardized situations. Because observation involves the whole of the being it leads to total growth, not merely to large collections of undigested ideas.

Instead of compelling children to acquire vast collections of undigested ideas, let us take up the challenge of real education which will help each child to see that each and every aspect of living is related intimately to all the others and nothing can be dismissed as a side issue or kept hidden from understanding. (This is not to say that children should be introduced at a tender age to aspects of society which are beyond the emotional sophistication of childhood.) All the natural rhythms of living, the light of day, the dark of night, the movement of being born, growing old, dying, the moments of sound and silence, the joys and the sorrow are all to be explored in total education.

The emphasis on sound and the neglect of the dimension of silence has been a sad development in education. In ancient India in the forest schools, exploration of the dimension of silence was as important as discovery in the dimensions of sounds and symbols. Now we relegate

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silence to religious institutions and deprive young people of firsthand discovery of this vitally significant dimension of living.

Why do we deprive the young people of a dimension of living that is entirely natural, that is essential for sane, peaceful living and is the only dimension in which the being can be totally relaxed, restored, revitalized ? Instead of feeding the children compulsively with dead words and ideas, could we teach them the balance of action and non-action, the healthy movement of work and relaxation, the rhythms of sound and silence.

Holistic education will have as its foundation total living, growth in which silence and sound, activity and relaxation, relating and communing, diversity and unity, which superficially may seem opposites, flow together in harmonious oneness, wholeness. The particulars of the subject matter, the intellectual skills, the arts, crafts, development of the sensitivity of the body, working with the land will all be permeated with appreciation, affection for wholeness.

There will not be the sharp dichotmies between intellectual work and manual labour, theoretical and practical studies, job-oriented and life-oriented studies. Because all are necessary for a full realization of the human being, they will merge in an elegant balance and proportion.

No child who emerges from holistic education will be afraid to work with the earth, to tenderly care for small plants nor will he or she be intimidated by the sophisticated ideas of advanced societies. A person who can grow his or her own food, has skills in a craft which will provide a livelihood, who can understand sophisticated political and economic theories, and who has faith in, love for, total living is not an easily exploited slave of society, not an easily manipulated tool of governments.

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Education should guide the child lightly in the wondrous unfolding of the sacred life, the gifts, talents, latent expressions that are abundant in every small being so that the child reaches elegant maturity, marvelous, precious, abounding full bloom without the tenderness made rigid by wounds, scars, without the uniqueness marred by heavy conditionings. As parents, educators, friends, we cannot own these small beings; we have not created them. We can love, appreciate, guide, protect, but not possess, not stamp with our identities, aspirations. We can be true gardeners, provide the right environment for growth, the nutrients, the water, encourage access to sun and light, keep away harmful influences, guide, watch attentively the growth, be responsive to need, but the growth itself is sacred, beyond our calculations, manipulations. We can assist and protect, we can pour out our hearts with love, but the act of growth has its own mysterious ways, its own sanctity and that we must respect with all our being.

If we truly love the young of the earth, we will let the mystery of growth manifest in our own lives so that the humility of learning spreads its fragrance in the homes where the young are being born, raised, and the schools where they are educated. The arrogance of knowing, spreads a deadness, dullness, decay wherever it asserts itself; the dead and the newly alive, do not dwell together successfully.

Let us become young in the love of learning, the thrill of living so that we can be worthy companions to these whole, fresh creatures who are pliable, open, sensitive to learning, exploring, discovering the magnificence, the charm of being alive in a fascinating, elegant world, ever ready to reveal its endless mysteries and infinite, ceasless, exquisite wonders.

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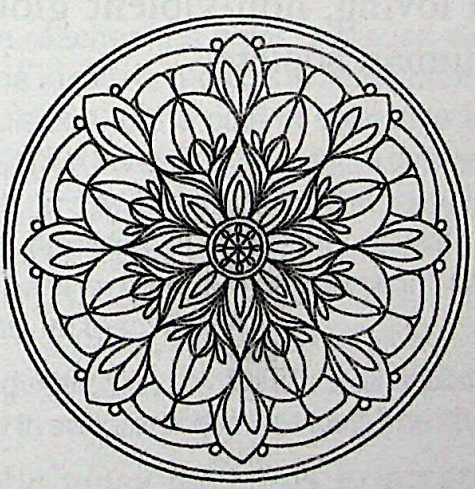
Part IV

Living In Wholeness



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As a global human family we need to pool our resources, work shoulder-to-shoulder to eliminate starvation, injustice, exploitation, and march hand in hand towards a loving, non-violent global human society.

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Accepting Social Responsibility

Most of us are not aware of our motivations for living, our priorities for action. We drift with the tides of societal fashions, floating in and out of social concerns at the whim of societal dictates, on the basis of images created by the media, or superficial, personal desires to be helpful, useful persons.

We are used to living at the surface, afraid of the depths, and therefore our actions, our concerns about humanity are shallow, fragile vessels easily damaged. Ultimately most of us are concerned chiefly with our small lives, our collection of sensual pleasures, our personal salvation, our anxiety about sickness, death, rather than the misery created by collective indifference, callousness.

We have reached the point, however, where we no longer have the luxury to indulge in self-centered comfort, personal acquisition at the cost of collective interests, or escape into religious pursuits. For us there can be no escape, no withdrawal, no private arena in which we can turn our backs on the sorrows of humanity, saying "I am not responsible; I am a peace-loving person. Others have created a mess, let them mend it."

The handwriting on the world's wall is plain: "Learn to live together or in separateness you die!" The choice is ours.

The world today forces us to accept, at least intellectually, our oneness, our interrelatedness. And more and more people are awakening to the urgency of arresting the accelerating madness around us.

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As yet, however, our ways of responding are superficial, unequal to the complexities of the challenge. We do not take or even consider actions that threaten our security, alter our habitual ways of drifting through life. If we continue to live carelessly, indifferently, emphasizing private gain, personal indulgences, we are essentially opting for the suicide of humanity.

RECOGNIZING THE INADEQUACY OF TYPICAL SOCIAL SERVICE

We can become involved in many acts of social service, according to our resources, without ever moving one inch from the center of our private interests; in fact, the very act of social service typically enhances self-image, and self-centeredness. But we cannot become involved in true social action, which strikes at the roots of problems in the society and in the human psyche without moving away from ego-centered motivations.

Ego-centered movements, motivations cannot possibly offer a remedy, no matter how elevated the cause, because whenever the ego moves, there will be the tension of what is mine - either ideologies or other acquisitions - and that which is not mine.

Today when we as committed, caring human beings try to come together to work for peace, we cannot hold even the simplest of discussions without ego-involvement interfering, spoiling the spirit of cooperation. As long as the rigidity of ego-centeredness is there, we cannot hope to create peaceful societies. In the name of peace, we strive for power, try to dominate others, and make a conflict out of each discussion. What begins with beautiful ideals soon diminishes to petty quarrels, bitterness, hatred, inability to carry on the work.

We must look deep into the network of personal motivations and discover what our priorities are. Our yearning

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for peace must be so urgent that we are willing to free ourselves from the immaturity of ego-centered action, willing to grow into the sane maturity required to face the complex challenges that affect our existence.

We have tried nearly every variation of ego- indulgence and the inevitable result has been that whenever the ego operates, one human will lust madly after power and try to dominate others who will either submit or rebel. Time and again we have seen the pattern repeated in the name of religion, revolution of the workers, campaigns for peace, social justice.

Whenever the ego is involved, the ideals, however glorious, are sublimated in the service of the self, and the full display of immature emotional responses becomes the dynamic of relationship. We have found that we can hate each other in the name of peace because we have different views of peaceful living. We can go to war over peace and this has been our great tragedy: we are so immature, emotionally insecure, so given to habitual verbal aggression that we cannot even discuss peace in a decent way.

If we go on indulging in verbal cruelties in the name of peace, how can we hope to build a peaceful society? Living on the superficial level as we do, we cannot be truly responsible citizens ready to undertake total social revolution. We may be capable of charity, of social service, but not of the genuine social action which is required to meet the challenges of today.

If we are motivated by desires for acceptance either by the dominant culture or the counter-culture, clarity of right action, passion of precise purpose will not be there. We may dedicate our lives and we may be praised for our contributions, but unless there is a deep awareness of the essence of our lives, a penetrating clarity about the meaning of human existence, the dedication and contributions will not penetrate to the roots of human misery.

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Perhaps for most of us the contributions, the superficial dedication is enough. We do not really want to be socially-responsible citizens. If we penetrate the dark layers of habitual action, we will discover the essential motives, priorities that impel us to act. We might find there that we are security-minded, that we act to relieve the guilt of our affluence and to appease the downtrodden who might be fired to action if not soothed with small tokens of charity.

We might find that we have taken up social service as a fashionable hobby which masks the inner rot of greed, exploitation, while spreading the illusion of concern, of social responsibility. Or we may discover that our acts of social service are a means of supporting, enhancing the social or religious institutions that provide security, a sense of belonging. Propaganda and charity unfortunately are often interwoven in one fabric. We often become involved in social service, charity because some authority, religious or otherwise, asserts that helpfulness to the poor is beneficial to the soul.

If any of us look honestly at our charitable acts, at our motives for action, we may find that while we are inclined to acts of social service, often with the best of intentions, we lack the fearlessness for social action, which in its revolutionary fervor will shake the very ground on which we stand. Society may congratulate us for acts of social service, but will certainly ostracize us for even contemplating acts of true social action.

UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCE OF TRUE SOCIAL ACTION

Since society does not raise us, nurture us, educate us to social action, how does the inclination to social action arise? In the dangerous circumstances in which we live, why should any of us even consider becoming a social activist?

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We see the conditions in the countries where we live and in other countries; we awaken to the injustice, the exploitation, the misery of human lives. We see that there is no living in these lands worthy of the name.

When we come face-to-face with the actualities of human suffering, what does the powerful moment of truth do to us? Do we retreat into the comforts of ideologies, theories, defense mechanisms or are we awakened at the core of our being ?

Please recall that Gandhiji traveled to South Africa, witnessed tortures, was himself exposed to cruelties. He could have set himself free of these cruelties; he could have returned to India, gone back to England. He was a barrister; he could have practiced there. He said, "This injustice cannot be tolerated. Injustices, exploitations, cruelties are an insult to the self-respect of a person." Even though we are not insulted but others are insulted, the insults hurt our sense of self-respect. It touches and moves deeply our sensitivities. He said, "You cannot be a witness to all of this; you cannot be a helpless witness."

When we witness the suffering with sensitivity, not seeking solace in theories, ideologies, organized, standardized approaches, but seeing what it is to suffer, to live in misery, to be exploited from every possible angle, don't we feel at a deep level related to the suffering in an intimate way ? When we see with spontaneous, sensitive openness the actualities of how our fellow humans, the creatures of the earth, live each day, there is no separation, apartness.

It is only when we bring in thoughts, theories, the protective covering of defense structures that we construct a barrier between ourselves and the suffering of others. Human-to-human, creature-to-creature, there is no apartness, no separation. We share the sorrow of the world.

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Awareness of misery, without the defense structure of borrowed ideas, ideologies, will naturally lead to action. The heart cannot witness misery without calling the being to action, without activating the force of love. We may not act on a global or national scale; it may be only on a community or neighborhood scale, but act, respond, we must. Otherwise hearts, naturally sensitive, begin to harden, become callous, indifferent and the opportunity for love, genuine sharing is lost.

Those of us who are aware of global human life and the complex problems of the global human family will operate in that sphere; others will take up the work at the local level. The scope of awareness will suggest the scope of action.

Social responsibility, social action at either the global or the local level flowers naturally when we perceive the world without the involvement of the ego-consciousness. When we relate directly to suffering, we are led to understanding and spontaneous action, but when we perceive the world through the ego, we are cut off from direct relationship, from communion that stirs the deepest level of our beings by the filter of centuries of ideas about poverty and injustice.

Traditional spiritual leaders have divided life into worldly and spiritual, and have insisted that the world is illusion. They said, "This world is *Maya*, is an illusion. So whatever action you have to take should be in relation to the absolute truth and not in relation to *Maya*." Thus a religious person sitting in meditation for ten hours a day need not mind the tyranny or the exploitation or the cruelties surrounding him. He would say, "That's not my responsibility. It's God's responsibility. God has created the world. He or she or it will take care of it."

This view does not respect life. The leaders called themselves religious, but had no reverence for life, no respect for human beings or for other creatures of the earth.

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Then came Ramakrishna one hundred years ago and said, "All life is divine. How do you dare fragment life, saying this is holy, this is divine and this material? Life is neither material nor spiritual; it is all divine, one whole, homogenous whole." He gathered around him young boys whom he started teaching, instructing in a scientific approach to spirituality. He said, "Look, God is presenting himself to you in the form of trees, animals, human beings: as long as you turn away from human beings, their misery and sorrows, your *samadhis* and attainments have no meaning."

And half a century later, came Gandhi saying that each action that we go through, every thought that we think, every gesture we make is either religious or not religious. Religion cannot be limited. We have to act. The spiritual inquiry has to be conducted in the middle of relationships. Every relationship is an opportunity for self-discovery. We can't create opportunities artificially.

While Ramakrishna and Gandhi have demonstrated in their lives and achievements the fact of the oneness and divinity of life, most of us continue to cling to out-of-date ideologies, to take refuge in theories of human suffering and misery. Actions based on such theories and ideologies have led to the ugliest, most callous, corrupt behavior imaginable, to an enormous expansion of human misery.

We cannot afford to go on repeating such behavior, to continue avoiding our responsibility for the plight of humanity.

EXPLORING OUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

We can become socially responsible readily, if we have the fearlessness to cast aside all theories, ideologies, all authorities of conditioned society, to free ourselves from the grip of the ego-structure. When we perceive life as a whole, we don't have to struggle to create interrelatedness, unity; it is the fact of our existence. When living beyond fragmentation,

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separateness, moving in wholeness, there is no barrier between us and others. On the mental plane, we construct artificial barriers, divisions, but in wholeness there are no barriers. Only relatedness exists. Then we share the sorrow of the world and in spontaneous, total responsiveness we act.

The social action we undertake in this state will vary according to the scope of our awareness, our talents, capacities, and the place where we are living. But living in wholeness, we cannot use any of the devices of the society or the psychological structure to put distance between ourselves and the problems of humanity. The awareness of oneness will sweep aside all doubts about our capacities, commitments, all self-consciousness, fears about the work ahead. Wholeness is spontaneous energy which moves without the doubts, fears, insecurities of the ego-structure.

According to our capabilities, talents, we will move easily, effortlessly into social action. We may contribute to social action by drawing pictures or creating pieces of sculpture; we may write poetry or prose to awaken and stimulate the consciousness of people, to intensify the awareness of the problems and stimulate values. We may travel around or serve where we are - there are ways and ways of engaging in social action.

Social action becomes an extension of personal life. We move into it spontaneously because we cannot do otherwise. It is a choiceless movement, taking into its fold the whole global human family and that concern that care, that revolutionary fervor is expressed in different individuals in different ways. Some will sing and by singing put fire into benumbed hearts and arouse them, stimulate them to dedicate themselves to the cause of social action.

As social activists we do not use our talents and capabilities for self-enhancement, for amassing personal

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prestige, or because, "I have a great talent and use it for the people." In an easy, simple way, with the humility that the sense of oneness arouses, we each mobilize our individual abilities and skills for the total upliftment of humanity.

Each of us will need to discover individual resources for social action and not depend on any revolutionary formulas or models. Each is unique.

Take, for example, Ramana Maharishi, a South Indian revolutionary thinker. He ran away from home and school at age twelve to sit in silence in a cave. A quiet, introverted person, the silence suited his temperament so completely that he never left his cave. His revolutionary action was limited to the field of I-consciousness. He said, "Unless you find out what you are, there cannot be any basic change in your life. Find out what you are."

These ideas were also revolutionary action. It was a social action for those who came to him. His temperament limited his field. Please see that not only awareness, but also temperaments influence the nature and quality of action.

DETERMINING APPROPRIATE SOCIAL ACTION

It is the motivation for getting at the roots of social problems, human misery that unites social activists. The expressions will be different according to abilities, temperaments, biological structures.

There are social activists who will never be satisfied with the subtle expressions of literature, music; they want concrete things - demonstrations, direct pressures, political or economic.

But what the literary figures have done, what the musicians have done is not less valuable than demonstrations or direct pressures. They are complementary and supplementary to each other. Those who agitate or those who demonstrate may say, "These intellectuals have done

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nothing." Such statements are unjust. The fire of revolution, self-respect, human dignity and civil liberties are kept alive in many countries today by literary figures. Clearly, they have done a lot.

Social action is a vast field. As long as the motivation is clear, precise and accurate, the individual has the freedom and should have the freedom to express ideas, to work according to inclination, tendency, temperament, talents. At the same time, if crises arise, if the people of the world tomorrow decide to assert themselves against nuclear armaments and we happen to be in a city where there is a big demonstration, we will join it. We won't say,"Oh, I have written about it or talked about it, so I don't need to join you." A demonstration is a collective expression in which all social activists can join and face the consequences.

Wherever we are, we are responsible to resist injustice, to be willing to put our comforts, securities, our lives at stake in fearless non-cooperation with injustice, exploitation. If we adopt all the habit patterns of the enslaved - the fear, the acceptance of tyranny, the intellectual, emotional blindness to -injustice, we deserve the inevitable consequences that are descending upon us in a dark storm cloud. If we are submissive, clinging to our small islands of security, naturally terror will reign. If we are willing to allow all others to perish - the peoples of other countries, races, castes, cultures, religions, the other creatures of the earth - so that we may flourish and endlessly increase our network of pleasures and comforts, obviously we are doomed to rot and decay.

A tender, loving concern for all living creatures will need to arise and reign in our hearts if any of us is to survive. The callousness of letting others be abused so that our petty little lives will be undisturbed, so that all the comforts of a lovely home, pleasant meals, good entertainment will not be threatened, portends doom for us all. Our lives will be truly

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blessed when the misery of one is genuinely felt to be the misery of all.

If we have reverence for living, concern about a decent quality of life for all beings, we will have to resist injustice, immorality, exploitation. We cannot sit quietly and meekly in our houses and temples, churches, mosques and weep over what is happening. Helplessly witnessing injustice is participating in injustice.

To be a whole human being, a caring person, a spiritual person is a great responsibility. It is not sufficient to be truthful ourselves; we have to resist untruthfulness in every walk of life.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To be ready for social responsibility, we will have to be mercilessly honest with ourselves. We have to be willing to put our individual comfort, security, luxury at stake. We will have to be willing to put our lives at stake, to be ready to die in non-cooperating with injustice. During these dark times we must be prepared to sacrifice all.

But when we resist injustice, refuse to cooperate with exploitation, march for peace, let us do all these things with love in our hearts and not hatred, bitterness, anger toward those we oppose. The force of love is the force of total revolution. It is the unreleased force, unknown, unexplored as a dynamic for change. We have tortured people, tried to brainwash, intimidate them; we have imprisoned, enslaved them, we have tried to convert them in the name of religions, ideologies, and yet they remain essentially unchanged. We have not given any scope to the unconditioned power of love to bring about change.

Do see that violence breeds more violence. Anyone who uses violent gestures, words, physical brutality even in

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the name of peace, justice becomes violent. Violent behavior is imprinted on the nervous system. It's not a weapon that can be picked up and thrown down. Hie organism is scarred by violence, and violence becomes the habitual way of responding.

We like to use violence because the results are quick. In a few days, a few hours we can make sudden changes, at least externally; the masters are dead and the previously downtrodden become the new masters. But what do they inherit? New forms of corruption emerge, new power struggles take place and soon more violence erupts.

People do not become mature, do not give up neurotic, insane behavior at the point of a gun. We have tried all the violent techniques possible, and we are in a hideous mess. The ways of education, understanding are slower, not so dramatic as the ways of violence. The ways of love are untested, but they offer the only possibilities available for lasting change, for genuine growth into maturity, sanity.

As serious-minded people we will have to resist the temptation of quick external results, of the emotional satisfaction of violence and retaliation and make a sincere opportunity for love, non-violence, co-operation to uplift people, create new lifestyles in which peace, virtually unknown for centuries, brings innocence to decaying peoples.

Freeing ourselves from the conditionings of the ego, we have the fearlessness to live in truth, to nonco-operate in a mature, loving, non-violent way. Moving from the ego, we have our images to protect, we have all sorts of justifications for violent, primitive behavior; there is the center of the self, that must be defended against attack. As ego-centered people, we have no possibility of releasing the force of love and non-violence. We may be very loving until the situation becomes hot, and then all the primitive behaviors come pouring out without restraint.

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For non-violent confrontation, for peaceful protest, we need to free ourselves from the grip of ego-consciousness. We'll have to work on both fronts simultaneously, the inner and outer, the individual and the collective. Freedom, to have any meaning, must be total freedom of the individual and the collective. Individually we'll free ourselves of the authority of the conditioned movement of the ego, and collectively we'll refuse to cooperate, resist the militant, imperialistic tendencies of government, exploitation of the downtrodden, and injustice to the defenseless.

The individual and collective works are both essential so that new motivations for living become actualities in all fields. We cannot carry on revolutions for new motives in collective living and hold on to the old, pre-revolutionary motives in personal life. Soon the personal motives will again gain ascendency over the collective motives. If there is greed, ambition, violence in our hearts, then we'll mold collective structures to serve these motivations.

As true revolutionaries we'll be as concerned about the corruption in our personal lives as in society. If we each transform our individual lives at the same time we seek to alter the collective structures, then these structures will have a chance of surviving in an idealistic form. They will not be corrupted by the touch of human greed, ambition.

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN SOCIAL ACTION

The peoples of the world clearly do not want wars, do not want to be destroyed because of some international dispute initiated by leaders who don't bother to consult with them. They do not want to sacrifice their young sons so that faraway leaders can play games of war. Yet the people have not asserted themselves globally to put a stop to the mad race the outcome of which will be the destruction of all creatures and the earth.

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The masses must grow totally into a fearless, responsible people with a voice that will be heard. The intelligence, sanity of the people must be our guiding light. We cannot depend on politicians, leaders who have been bought and sold so many times they have hardly any fibre of morality, concern for the people, left.

Those of us who love peaceful, decent living, who love the earth and all its inhabitants will have to show the way to total growth into fearless maturity. We will be the new cells for a transformed human being. But if we try to show the way to the people while carrying on petty quarrels, one peace organization in opposition to another, struggles for power within a group, inability to carry on the work in a harmonious way, then we don't deserve the trust of the people, and, however beautiful, the collective structures we initiate won't have the fragrance of truth.

We have tried social action from the motives of hate, bitterness, anger, but it has failed. Let us give love, friendship, cooperation, non-violence a decent opportunity to unfold in our individual and collective lives. Hatred has only limited force, but love as the essence of existence has unlimited potential. The energy of the cosmos moves in love, and only the petty energy of the ego moves in hatred. As socially-responsible citizens, let us not make the mistake of assuming that the force of love is weak, delicate, acceptable only in very private moments. It is only love that has the healing, the creative force to salvage the earth from the destruction that centuries of hatred has wrought and to uplift people to a decent way of living where starvation, dehumanizing poverty, the anxiety of wars will not suffocate sensitive beings and stain the face of the earth.

Our individual and collective lives sorely need the soothing, healing touch of love. We will not be able to control, conquer, measure, standardize love as we have

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human-made objects and structures, but the force of love will reveal the glory, the grandeur, the majesty of living to those who open their hearts. Social action without love is no longer a viable possibility. Upliftment of people without compassion is meaningless. The revolution of love, non-violence awaits the committed and the fearless. That love exists makes life worth living.

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Communing in Oneness

If we are not too depressed by the thunderous collapse of human-made structures, if we are not exhausted with anxiety about the rapid decay of the web of illusions we have spun, then we might notice that these are thrilling times to be alive.

The heavy superstructures are collapsing; states and cities, the monstrous economic structures, the huge centralized industrial complexes are rotting, disintegrating, falling to pieces. But we need not become terribly sentimental when the false destroys itself. We will have to go through the intense suffering of having decaying structures fall at our feet; we'll have to go through the consequences of our mistakes, foolish priorities, inflated vanities.

We have extracted too many pleasures and comforts from the earth; we have been callous to all else than our selfish interests, we have founded a new religion based on exaltation of the intellect with the scientists as priests, and material progress as the guiding light. We have done so many ridiculous things, let us not be depressed because we have to pay the price.

These are stirring times. Everything we have believed in as citizens of modern cultures is showing its false colors, indicating the mistaken promises, revealing the disastrous consequences if we proceed on the same mad course. Practically every literate person on the globe knows that we are headed with fantastic speed toward nuclear destruction of all the creatures of the planet, that we are calculating with great cunning to blow ourselves off the earth. We cannot live

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a day longer in the pretense that the economic, military, industrial, political structures operate with any concern for the welfare of human beings, that they are leading us toward a better, happier life in which our potentials as human beings will be fulfilled.

The superstructures, originally invented to serve human beings, have grown into greedy monsters that have destoyed the freedom of most humans and many of the other creatures of the earth. Intended as servants, they have become the new feudal masters and we the slaves. There is no longer any dignity to being a human being, let alone dignity for the other beings.

The new feudal masters, greedy, lustful, and rotten to the core, are falling into chaos. We will have to go through this chaos, anarchy. We cannot expect to be spared from the fruits of our folly. All of these human-made structures based on false premises about the nature of the human being as motivated only by comforts, gadgets, sensual pleasures, endlessly willing to give up freedom, decency, basic values for material goods, agreeable to be subservient to the leaders of the political, military, industrial complexes will have to go. We will lose our material comforts, but we might regain our freedom, our decency as human beings.

RECOGNIZING THE URGENT NEED FOR CHANGE

Let us not be too depressed by the collapse of the false and the suffering we will have to go through. Let us take up again our responsibility for living and begin the work of creating alternative lifestyles that are based on a true perception of what living is, what a human being is, what wholeness is. People in every country are seeing the false as the false and beginning in small ways to suggest, to create new ways of being, based on a holistic view of living in which every vibration of life has meaningful relationship to every other.

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For most of the century, we have tried to convert every living being into an economic commodity. We have looked at a tree, for example, as potentially useful to serve the economic interests of humans, to be converted into wood products or fuel or something else functional. Or we have made an intellectual study of the tree to fulfill academic requirements which lead to economic gain. Whatever way we have viewed the tree, we have sought some advantage for the human being who we have been told is the apex of life.

We have not considered the tree as a companion being who contains the same five principles of life as we humans. We have not seen the tree in relation to space, earth, water, the animals, the birds who nest there. We have not taken in one sweep of perception the feel of the tree bark, the shapes of the branches, the light on the leaves, the scent of the flower blossoms, the movement of creatures living there, the awareness of roots, nutrients in the earth, the relation to space.

We have not been able to look at the tree free of the motivations of human culture. We have not learnt from the tree anything about steadiness, we have not taken lessons from the tree about remaining rooted in one spot and responding in dignity to the challenges that come. We have not perceived, learned from the wholeness of the tree. We have hardly appreciated what grand beings they are, each with its individual expression. In our callousness, in our mad rush to become something we are not, in our foolish priorities, we have missed many priceless opportunities to commune with the lovely beings of the earth.

We have collectively and individually made an ugly mess of our wondrous opportunity for living. We have turned our backs on the natural splendor of the world and have pursued every material pleasure that scientists, technologists, industrialists could invent and produce.

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We gave full sanction to the scientists and technologists to invent more fascinating gadgets for our pleasure, for our entertainment, and were truly surprised when they invented the nuclear weapons able to destroy us all. We had long ago sold out all values of living, traded them for material comforts, security, and found we had no moral currency, no moral force sufficient to put a stop to the mad games we had initially sanctioned.

Internally we are divided against ourselves; the emotions want one thing, the intellect another, the impulses of the body yet another. In our relationships we divide the world into the me and the not-me, and there is competition, comparison; there is asserting and protecting our images. In communities we are fragmented into castes, creeds, classes, communal groups, each anxious to exploit the other. As nations we are divided by socioeconomic patterns with the powerful dominating the weak.

Investing all our energies in the scientific, technological, industrial advancements; handing over our values, resources of the earth, human labor to the priests and lords of scientific advancement, accepting the priorities of intellectual achievements, material accomplishments, we have brought about a situation in which we can put people into space, land on the Moon, the Mars, build computers that speak, design systems of artificial intelligence, but we cannot live in harmony with our neighbors, cannot spontaneously love another, cannot respect the earth. We can understand the most complicated ideologies, but do not have insight into the dynamics of our own minds. Rather pathetic, isn't it?

Although we are surrounded by forecasts of doom, complete destruction of every living creature on the earth, spelled out in great detail, the potential for each of us as a human being to learn, nature has not yet been destroyed. We may be stunned at the moment by the stupidity, ugliness, enormity of our mistakes, but life is not over.

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There is a kind of joy when the false is clearly exposed as false, when there is realization that the burden of the untrue need no longer be borne by humanity. The illusion of fragmentation is dying, and the truth of wholeness is being born. The curse of fragmentation is losing its grip as explorers into the nature of truth, reality are discovering the uncharted realm of wholeness.

PREPARING FOR A QUANTUM LEAP INTO WHOLENESS

We are at the threshold of a quantum leap in human consciousness, ready for a spontaneous, timeless, wondrous explosion into awareness of the wholeness of life. In most fields of endeavor there is a small, but significant holistic movement. Now we have holistic movements in medicine, health, physics, ecology, biology, psychology, even in economics. Intellectually we are being prepared in many fields, we are moving along parallel lines, to expand understanding of the intriguing interrelationships of every wave of life.

In every land, in almost every field, there are a few who are awakening to the misconceptions, false perceptions of reality that have limited science and caused great havoc in our personal lives. Some of the physicists have altered radically their views of reality, moving from fragmented study of matter to realization that there may not be matter at all. And the physicists are recognizing the necessities of studying events as systems, fields, giving attention to organizing principles and wholeness. From a narrow reductionist view of matter, based on Cartesian, Newtonian principles, physics is opening to patterns, vibrations, a holistic view of reality. Physics is daring to move to the shores of metaphysics.

Economics is also moving away from its Cartesian-Newtonian foundation and becoming if not a friend, at least a close acquaintance of ecology and humanism. Biology is

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moving to study of self-organizing systems that have the capacity to not only maintain but transcend themselves. Medicine and fields of health sciences are studying whole life systems that include the emotions, lifestyle, nutritional patterns, environment of the person, which is a radical departure from viewing the body as a machine, as an automobile, made up of component parts. Education has benefited from the studies of the human brain. Today there are programs to help the child realize the capacities of both halves of the brain, not only the analytic, logical capabilities of the left hemisphere, but also the intuitive, spatial, holistic potential of the right hemisphere.

In social action, there has been the move toward recognition of the global human family, the call for world government of and by the people. Gandhi brought us to the world view that truly we are all a global human family, that we are one.

Life is one. It cannot be divided into small compartments with a different code of conduct, a different way of behaving in each one. Politics cannot be a division of life that has its own value structure; economics, religion, family life cannot be fragmented into separate compartments each with its own way of being. Life is one. If life is to have any sanity, there must be only one value structure, one set of motivations for all of living.

And spirituality brings the world view that we are all inseparable in the divine dance of the cosmos. All divisions of the me and the not-me, the inner and the outer, the personal and the private, the religious and secular are arbitrary, artificial, invented by the human mind. We have falsely viewed the skin as a shell which is a border for the private world of the me, the ego, and all the private thoughts and emotions are contained there. We have seen the skin as the boundary between the personal territory and the private territory.

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But this superficial view of the human as a separate physical, material entity is being denied on all fronts. The inner and the outer are essentially indistinguishable in a constant flow of energy; the thoughts, emotions emanate from the body as vibrations, and the vibrational field penetrates the whole being. We can no longer sustain any false hope of being separate, private.

In the holistic exploration, every movement of our lives is involved, every action - there are no private closets where we can hide our favorite indulgences, disorders, neurotic behaviors. All is included in the searchlight of discovery. We haven't the possibility of hypocrisy, of being very spiritual when circumstances are favorable, but immature, primitive whenever situations are not to our liking.

Every behavior is investigated so that a whole, mature, sane person with the fearlessness to live in truth is born. This investigation of divine wholeness, intelligent orderliness, timeless, mysterious wholeness is the essence of spirituality. It is the personal discovery of the eternal wholeness in daily living, in the challenges that life brings to our doorsteps with the fresh rays of each dawn.

CREATING HOLISTIC LIFESTYLES

Now what do we do when we become aware that life is a wholeness, that all beings are one? Do we wait until the leaders of the holistic movements emerge with new prescriptions for lifestyle based on wholeness; do we look for the savior to show the new path that we will mindlessly follow? Whenever there is the feeling of insecurity, uncertainty about the future, the human mind moves to form a new cult, invent a new religion, build a new temple and part with all freedom in the desire to belong, to feel safe, to have prescribed formulas for behavior. We may be forced to leave our dwelling because the foundation is rotting, the roof is collapsing,

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the walls falling in, but we quickly erect a new structure with all the fittings of the old one.

The chaotic circumstances of the times in which we are living are forcing us out of the old structures, but what do we do with our uncertainty about the future? Collectively we can no longer feel safe in the fragmentary, narrow focus of the material world. The handwriting on the wall makes absolutely clear the devastation of all beings on the earth if we continue on the same path. We are thrust into insecurity, uncertainty; peoples all over the globe are forced out of secure little nooks, made anxious about what the future will hold, particularly for the young who may have no decent future at all.

The natural tendency for us when faced with insecurity is to immediately grasp something that has at least the illusion of security. If the old structures have failed, we will not rest until we find something new that appears to have promise and attach ourselves to that, whether it is a new social movement, another religious cult, a charismatic personality, and if the holistic approach is the new wave of the future, we grasp onto one aspect, for example, holistic health, and become fanatics about that.

We have cheated, spoiled many potentially significant social movements - democracy, socialism, communism - by not penetrating to the fundamentals, by sapping their revolutionary fervor by superficial acceptance, in the desire for a free ride. Will we do the same with holistic movements?

We find ourselves faced with uncertainties in all aspects of living, and we are abundantly clear that the traditional solutions are exhausted of all vitality. If the love of freedom is still alive in us, we'll use the opportunity that is being thrust on us to learn something about living, something about the reality in which we exist.

On all fronts, the scientists, ecologists, economists, psychologists, social activists are pointing out that we have

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come to the end of the fragmentary approach; the obsession with the physical, material parts of life has been a grand mistake with enormous repercussions for all beings who inhabit the earth. They are pointing to a holistic view of life in which every being is significantly related to every other being, and they are suggesting that what we have mapped out as reality, the physical, material world, may be only relative reality and true reality may be yet unexplored.

We are being advised that the physical world as we have known it in the past may have only a limited reality and the absolute reality has yet to be explored by scientists. When we become aware that what we thought was real has only a relative reality, what do we do? Do we wait in confusion until the newspapers announce that science has discovered ultimate reality or do we each, wherever we are placed in life, begin a personal exploration of reality, of the meaning of life, of the nature of a human being, a living creature?

If we are concerned human beings who care about the quality of living not only for ourselves but for other beings, we will not wait for others to explore and feed us predigested conclusions, but we will become personally excited about this adventure of living and discover wholeness for ourselves.

Retreat is not possible. Either we remain passive and invite stagnation - stagnant lives like stagnant water begin to stink - or we proceed as explorers into the unknown. A lovely challenge, isn't it?

As explorers we must lead attentive, sharp, precise, aware lives. We cannot explore successfully with anarchistic personal lives, full of careless ways of being. We need the vitality, the precision of attentiveness to conduct a personal exploration of truth, wholeness. Investigation of truth, the wholeness of reality, is not an emotional, sentimental pastime

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of the idle. It is as precise an investigation as that of mathematics; we haven't yet recognized the precision, orderliness of reality beyond thought and we are under the illusion that because ultimate reality cannot be reduced to the rationality of the human mind, that it is not precise. If we spend a day with nature without sentimental notions, without ambition, we might have some feel for the exact orderliness of reality.

Let us not be simple-minded, credulous people as we investigate beyond the known. We'll use the rational mind, the beauty of intellect, as far as it will carry us, to the frontiers of the known; we'll be as precise as scientists in preparing our lives for exploration of the unknown. Eventually we will have to leave the movement of thought behind because its movement is too limited for awareness of the wholeness of reality.

Thought will take us only to the frontiers of the known, because its nature is to perceive differences and not the whole. Thought immediately divides between the subject of perception and the object of perception. The subject of thought, the thinker, is separated from the object of thought at the moment of perception.

The thought structure carries the burden of thousands of years of what has been known, quantified, formulated into theories and ideologies; it dwells on the memories of yesterday and the thousands of yesterdays before, which exert a pressure on the mind to carry the momentum of the past into the future.

It is very fortunate that we do not have to accept any notions about the mind on secondhand authority. We humans are endowed with self-conscious energy; that is, we can watch the movement of mind while it is in operation.

We each have the lovely opportunity of observing the mind while it functions throughout the day, in relationships,

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at work, during quiet hours, during crises. If we don't become too depressed about the repetitive, mechanistic nature of our minds, it can be great fun for each of us to find out for ourselves what it is that we think about all day. If we stay with the experiment of observation even for a day, we'll have no more doubts about the source of human misery, the source of conflict, exploitation, wars in the world.

Maturity, sanity individually and collectively is not possible if we each do not become responsible for discovering in detail the contents, process of our mental structures. The motives for living, the priorities for action, the dynamics of relationship are contained in the mind, have their source in the mind and the collection of the individual motives, priorities, dynamics are the foundation of society, civilization. If we are concerned about the quality of our collective lives we cannot go on in ignorance of the mechanism of our individual minds.

The source of all human misery is in the mind. Individual minds form the collective and the structures of the collective form the motivations, priorities of the individual minds. The collective structures based on motives of greed, competitiveness, fear, desire to dominate give sanctions to these motives in the individual minds and pass them on to the young in the culture.

We cannot break the cycle of individual and collective misery until we mature beyond the limited, fragmentary view of the human being. Lives centered on the ego will be forever selfish, possessive, defensive, aggressive. There is no road to peace through the land of the ego. We have thoroughly explored all the avenues of thought and ego. It is only in exploration of what is beyond this limited territory, in the investigation of wholeness that there is any possibility of sanity, harmony, peace, compassion.

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REVEALING WHOLENESS IN DAILY LIVING

We need to become scientific researchers of our own lives, to discover who we are and how we operate. But we will be scientists who have a love of humanity, a concern for the quality of human life and a tenderness toward all beings. We can no longer tolerate indifference, callousness toward living beings, even in the name of science.

This is the era when science and spirituality will merge in the investigation of the science of living. Spirituality has in the past used all sorts of unscientific ways of investigating truth, lapsing into credulity, belief, torturing the body to control the impulses, becoming fanatic about dogmas, cults, personalities. All these unscientific, unhealthy ways of exploring the truth of living will have to go and are going.

Spirituality has something to learn from science about how to conduct an investigation, how to observe objectively, take up questions impartially without preconceived judgments, postpone making premature conclusions. Science also has something to learn from spirituality about the sanctity of life, reverence for living beings, the morality of investigation.

As we begin to inquire into truth, the nature of reality, we might take the help of the scientific approach to discover something about our individual minds, brains. To merge into wholeness, we will have to leave behind all movements, even the subtle movement of observation, but we begin by watching with scientific impartiality, precision the operation of our individual minds.

We begin wherever we are, wherever we are placed in life. If we are working as social activists, we don't leave the work, abandon dedication to the upliftment of the people and became terribly involved with our petty little egos. Rather throughout the day, we will be attentive to the movement of the ego, the mind.

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Throwing a searchlight on the inner life has not traditionally been the interest of social activists who are dedicated to striking at the roots of social injustice in the socioeconomic, political, military structures. Examining the inner life has been reserved for psychologists and spiritual inquirers. But today these false divisions are falling away of their own accord, and whoever is interested in the quality of living - ecologists, scientists, social activists, educators, economists, physicians - will have to include the study, observation of the workings of the mind in a holistic approach to living.

We no longer have the luxury of each carving out a piece of territory and investigating it with the borders clearly defined. In the present era, we must share all of living, all of the earth, all the expertise. The economists will have to share with the ecologists, the educators with the social activists, the scientists with the spiritual inquirers.

The age of staked-out territories for specialization is over. Gone are the days when we could withdraw into our separate laboratories and conduct our private experiments with a fragment of life, when we could disdain the work of others and assert the supremacy of our particular pattern of investigation.

We have been brought out of our separate tribes into the global human family and there we must live in the harmony that family life is meant to have. It is the warmth of love that will make living together possible. In most healthy families, we try to get along, support one another, accept each other's idiosyncracies, ways of being. We must be aware that particularly in the Western countries, the sanctity of the family has diminished and in the mad rush to be someone of importance in the eyes of society, the tenderness of mutual support and care is often missing. But let us return to the original meaning of family in which the members cooperate

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with one another, help each other overcome weaknesses, provide support in the times of difficulty, offer healing love to one another. This cooperation is what is desperately needed in the global human family today.

Humanity today is not only suffering from the misery induced by the threat of devastation by nuclear weapons, it is suffering also because of the pitiable state of relationships, the lack of affectionate support, the healing touch of love.

The source of love is obviously not in petty egos that want to compete, protect images, become jealous and are easily hurt in relationships. Love flowers when the ego is not, when the I-consciousness with its self-centered motives is not moving. Love does not recognize the boundaries of the me; it sweeps aside all divisions, all human-made fragments and brings hearts together in joyous celebration of living.

We desperately need to revive the force of love in our daily relationships, our work places, our homes. It is not the so-called love of romantic novels, with emphasis on sensual pleasure. Love is not extracting some pleasure out of the other; we have been through all of that and have witnessed in massive detail the distortion of the force of love in our lives and the endless, pathetic misery it causes. The love for all beings, for the earth does not have a motive. It just is.

Are we embarrassed to love one another as members of a global human family? Are we afraid of the tenderness of love?

We have become accustomed to treat one another callously, harshly. To have little respect, sensitivity for the life of the other person. We have accepted living with careless aggression towards each other and are used to enduring the endless conflicts that aggressive tendencies bring about.

The dynamic of a global human family cannot be based in careless aggression, for it will mean the end of living for us

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all. The new dynamic must be love, co-operation, friendly communion.

Let us not be investigators who shine the searchlight of truth only on external structures, our professional specialties, our limited fields of endeavor prescribed by our talents and capabilities. Let us turn the searchlight on the inner workings of the mind and our relationships, our ways of working, living with one another.

A total approach to living does not allow us to become highly concerned about the lives of others, the plight of the animals, the earth, the research into physics, biology, economics, medicine and to leave our personal lives a pathetic mess. The days of excellence in the laboratory, grand work for the people, excellence in art, literature, music and the stench of decay in private lives is over once and for all.

TRANSCENDING THE LIMITED

Being a member of a global human family will not be easy for us if we are attached to the movement of the thought structure which is necessarily fragmentary in its view of reality. We will need as a family to transcend the thought structure and live in wholeness.

Going beyond, transcending thought structure is not as difficult as it is often made to seem. We have made a mystery of this process, particularly of silence, meditation, have wrapped the unknown in the trappings of the occult, the extrasensory, the mystical. The dimension of silence must be restored to its place in sane, healthy living.

It is true that in the dimension of silence there are energies that have as yet been unexplored in a systematic way, and so seem mysterious. It is not that they are essentially mysterious; it is simply that they haven't yet been systematically investigated by science. But just as radio

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waves were mysterious at one time, the energies of the domain of silence seem extraordinary to us.

The dimension of silence awaits us in the natural rhythmic process of moving from action to non-action, sound to the sound-free dimension of silence where total relaxation is possible. Most of us do not know total relaxation in our lives; we know only the relative relaxation of being away from work and still worrying about the work, brooding about relationships, what will happen tomorrow, the day after tomorrow and in our old age when we may be sick and dying. We do not know what it is to have refreshing sleep that brings us to the dawn, revitalized, full of vigor to meet the challenges of the new day. We know only endless fatigue, pressure, tension, dullness.

If we are to have the freshness, vitality to take up work as social activists, if we are to realize our potential as whole human beings, then we need to discover the harmonious rhythm of moving easily, gracefully from action to non-action, being restored there by the stillness of non-action and moving again to action. It is an entirely natural flow and rhythm, but one unfamiliar to us, because modern societies condition us to an imbalanced emphasis on action, becoming someone, accomplishing something that will make us seem important in the eyes of society.

In social action, the ethic is to work ceaselessly for the cause without any concern for the fatigue of the body, the exhaustion of the nerves, the pressure on the brain. Because the challenges facing us are increasingly complex, we cannot successfully meet these challenges with exhausted lives, which have no vitality for spontaneous, creative approaches to the work of uplifting the people. A tired organism falls into rigidity, inflexibility, because it hasn't the energy to move forward, enhance its understanding, meet new situations with sharpness, pliability, spontaneity.

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We will have to educate ourselves to non-action, for it has been neglected in our lives. To educate ourselves we need to set aside same time each day in which we can be free from interruptions: no telephone calls, no visitors, no disturbances in order to find out what it is to be in a sound-free, motion-free dimension.

In the dimension of silence, we are not the masters, the controllers of life; we relax from all such movement and in that total relaxation, we are open, receptive to the energies which have not yet been explored by science. When we are not, when all movement associated with even the subtle layers of the mind ceases, then a wondrous, joyous communing with the essence of living is possible.

Do not take these descriptions as dogma; if we are interested in the nature of ultimate reality in living in wholeness, we must discover it for ourselves in the vast dimension beyond thought.

You may know that ancient wise people of India made many fascinating explorations into the realm of silence, into the nature of absolute reality and wrote ecstatic hymns about the essense of reality.

Absolute reality cannot, of course, be described, but the ancients tried to give a feel of the bliss, the purity, unspoiled by any movement in the realm of vibrations, conditioned energies, a feel of the timeless isness that is never bound by beginnings and endings, the everlasting love that has no motive and cause but simply is. These hymns are very beautiful, but they are only romantic poetry unless there is a personal, firsthand exploration of what is beyond the known, charted boundaries of the mind.

REALIZING OUR POTENTIAL

Like those ancients, we have thrilling opportunities for discovering new dimensions of being, to move beyond a pathetic narrow, fragmentary view of living into wholeness.

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We have exhausted the pleasures of fragmentary living. Now they bore us. We have tried innumerable patterns of collective living and they have failed. Even the solace of love, sincere friendship, meaningful relationships have been crushed in the pitiful race for acquisition of material goods, collection of theories and ideologies. We are collectively sad, miserable people, who live in the shadows of despair, anxiety about whether living at all is possible.

We can't trust each other either as individuals or nations. Politicians all over the world are being bought and sold like a consumer commodity. We can't put our trust there. We feel ashamed of what we are doing to our fellow creatures, to the earth which has been truly a mother to us, providing the nourishment to make living possible. And the heritage we are giving to the young, we cannot even consider without the agony of remorse, intense guilt.

We are not justified in indulging in the negative energies of despair, until we have thoroughly explored the potential for living, and that we have not done. We have raced in circles, holding on to our pet theories, ideologies, acquisitions and haven't as a people ventured beyond familiar fragments.

We cannot cry in anguish that living is doomed, that all is hopeless, that we've tried everything possible, when in fact we've chosen to operate in very limited spheres of the most gross energies and have announced in great arrogance that there is nothing else.

The beauty and the sanctity of living is that no matter how heavy the darkness, the possibility for transcendence is still available to each human being as a seed which can any moment open, flower into a new, mature, transcendent being.

The difficulties of living are not insurmountable for committed human beings who are not easily defeated by challenges, who feel deeply and passionately the rapture in

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living; they are not insurmountable because we each share innumerable potentialities of creativity, intelligence, love.

Instead of indulging in fear and self-pity, let us each one, not only those designated as social activists, take on the responsibility of transcending to a holistic view of living. Let us move beyond the artificial boundaries of the known and venture into the subtler spheres of existence, the abode of intelligence, creativity, love and there commune. Those of us who are leading the way to holistic living are the adventurers infusing the shadows of materialistic existence with the radiance of wholeness.

We have been indulging in lifestyles which are out of adjustment with the harmony of life. These lifestyles will not prevail in the ascendance of humanity to a holistic way of living in elegant harmony with wholeness.

We have invested in structures of collective life that are ugly, corrupt, polluted. Why shouldn't they tumble down? We see on the horizon the waves of destruction about to crash upon the civilizations of the world, but let us not be afraid. Eternal life will not be destroyed and the potential of the human being will not be annihilated.

Following the dark night of destruction, a new day dawns in the life of humanity and a new being unfolds in the tender, tentative rays of that dawn. We have been through the darkness of exploitation; harshness to human beings and the earth. We have endured the dehumanizing effects of the socio-economic, political structures. We have shed the endless tears of grief and despair, waiting for a new day, a fresh opportunity to live, anxious in our hearts that it would never be.

The tenderness of the dawn, the freshness of daybreak light, have been seriously absent from our lives. In our dark cells of self-imposed imprisonment, we have been barricaded

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from the healing, rejuvenating rays of love and compassion, even gentle affection and we have been closed from the light of wonder and understanding.

Let us rise above our ego barriers and meet the dawn in the openness of trust and faith. We are not defeated and to resign ourselves to a permanent abode of darkness is unworthy of our heritage, of our responsibility as precious creations.

Let this dawn herald a new day in which peacefulness and harmony flow into our hearts and hearths, a day in which we discover the delicate rhythms of wholeness, the powerful presence of oneness. On this day let us learn to commune with all the beings in the blessed realm of silence and melt into the single heartbeat and pulse of eternal isness.

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Vimala Thakar

Vibrating in Harmony with the Cosmic Symphony

VimalaThakar is an extraordinary presence in the world today. She is a serious revolutionary in both spirituality and social action. She transformed not through hatred and violence but through love and compassion. Although Vimalaji is a profoundly spiritual person, she belongs to no sect, temple or a church. She is deeply committed to social actions builds no organizations or ideologies. Vimlaji says, "Liberation is freedom from the known. It is not something mysterious for the chosen few, beyond the reach of common people like you and me. It is birth right of every human being."

Vimalaji is a revolutionary in her approach to spirituality and had been from early childhood. She experimented on her own to discover spiritual truths, without taking the easy way of following a *Guru* or authority or any scriptures and traditions. Though she met great personalities and learnt much from them, being always receptive, she did not get attached to anyone. Vimalaji's intense urge to discover the Eternal had prepared the ground for her total transformation.

Vimalaji was born in India, on 15th April 1921, *Ramanavami* day, at *Bilaspur* and spent her childhood amidst the deeply spiritual atmosphere of her family and their friends. Very close among them were *Dada Dharmadhikari* and *Tukdoji Maharaj*; *Swami Sitaramdasji*, *Maa Anandamayi*, *Vinobaji*, *Sane Guruji* and *Jayprakash Narayan*. Vimalaji was highly inspired by great saints *Gyaneshwar*, *Ramakrishna Paramhamsa*, *Swami Vivekanand*, *Raman Maharshi* and also *Swami Ramatirth*.

Vimalaji lived her understanding without any time lag from her childhood. This approach was one of the pillars of her

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teachings in later life. She could say from her own experience, "I feel that understanding is for living. If you understand the truth and do not live it, you are committing a crime against life." In all the challenges, many ups and downs of an eventful life, Vimalaji maintained the attitude of an enquirer. Her father *Bagaram C. Thakar* was a lawyer by profession and the president of Rationalist Society of India. Her father soon noticed his daughter's aspirations and took a promise from Vimalaji not to depend on the authorities or teachers, past or present, but to rely on her own inner understandings as her guide in life. Vimalaji studied at Nagpur University and post graduated in Eastern and Western Philosophy. She developed many skills and mastered them. She won many trophies and awards in elocution competitions and debates. She also took part in drama and singing songs. She was excellent in horse riding, boating and swimming.

Vimalaji was sent for the world assembly of youth conference in 1951 after completing her studies. There she was selected as chairperson and chosen to go to the world council of young women at Cornell University in the U.S.A. She returned India and joined *Bhoodan* movement started by *Vinoba Bhave* in 1953. For 10 years she worked without becoming disciple of *Vinobaji*. She was one among the toppers. Her dedication gave a different dimension and height to *Bhoodan* movement. She travelled India to its length and breadth. Vimalaji met J. Krishnamurti in 1956. She listened to his discourses intently and with full attention. Simultaneously she probed deeply within herself. From 1963 onwards, *Shivkuti* at Mt. Abu and *Shivkul* at Dalhousie were her permanent stay though she continued her traveling in India and other parts of the Globe. Friends from all over the world met her with many questions and they got solution based on spiritual foundation. Vimalaji worked to raise the

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level of consciousness of humanity, firstly by her own life experiments and living and then:

By her work with spiritual enquirers, women and social activities worldwide.

By her revolutionary way of working and interacting with others showing a new dynamics of human relationships.

By her articles, talks and traveling in India and abroad which provided a unique vigilance.

By her talks on *Upanishads*, on *Patanjali's Raja Yoga*, on the teachings of *Bhagvad Gita*, on the commentaries on *Gyaneshwari* and talks on innumerable subjects by answering questions. Vimalaji provided a modern approach to the ancient teachings thus upholding the flame of ancient Indian culture.

Vimalaji went to the U.S.A. in 1951 and winded up this phase of wandering in 1991. These four decades were festival of friendship for the enquirers throughout the Globe. Vimalaji never allowed any formal arrangements for this purpose around her. Yet invitations came from all over the Globe, books were published and translated in many languages, talk were recorded.

The most remarkable aspect of Vimalaji's life was to work without strict organized structure, with no paid staff, no regular office, no propaganda and no fund collecting. It was on the basis of friendship by informal groups calling themselves **"Friends of Vimala"**. There are more than 300 titles of books published in different languages. Vimalaji's dialogues at different places and time are available in the form of audio CDs and video DVDs. On 11'" March 2009 that was a full moon day according to Indian calendar, Vimalaji left her body peacefully for her heavenly abode at Mt. Abu in India.

(Scribe : Shreyas Karia)

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All Books by Vimala Thakar (English)

Sr.	Title
1.	A Challenge to Youth*
2.	A Scientific Outlook on The Integration Through Education
3.	An Indian Quest for Democracy
4.	Arise, Awake and Act Part-1*
5.	Arise, Awake and Act Part-2
6.	Avadhoot of Arabudachal (Biography)
7.	Being and Becoming
8.	Benaras University Talks
9.	Beyond Awareness*
10.	Blossoms of Friendship
11.	Coming Parliamentary Elections*
12.	Ego*
13.	Exploring Freedom*
14.	Fear not Life*
15.	FiveTalks Given at Claremont, California
16.	Flame of Enquiry
17.	Friendly Communion (Poems)
18.	From Heart to Heart*
19.	From Intellect to Intelligence*
20.	Glimpses of Ishavasya
21.	Glimpses of Rajayoga
22.	Global Vigil*
23.	Himalayan Pearls
24.	Insights into Bhagvad Gita
25.	Kathopanishad
26.	Kena Upanishad
27.	Life and Living*
28.	Life as Teacher*
29.	Life As Yoga*

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Sr.	Title
30.	Life is Consciousness
31.	Life is Movement*
32.	Life is to be Related
33.	Living a Truly Religious Life
34.	Meditation A Way of Life*
35.	Meditation Book-1*
36.	Meditation Book-2*
37.	Meditation Book-3*
38.	Meditation Book-4
39.	Meditation in Daily Life
40.	Mutation of Mind
41.	Nijmegen University Talks
42.	Nijmegen University Talks-2
43.	Old Order Changeth
44.	On An Eternal Voyage
45.	Passion for Life
46.	Path of Nirvana
47.	Personal Discovery of Truth
48.	Pilgrimage Within*
49.	Quest for Truth (Vimala Amritham)
50.	Radical Peace*
51.	Sadhana and Sadhak*
52.	Science and Spirituality
53.	Silence
54.	Silence in Action
55.	Songs Of Yearning*
56.	Spirituality and Social Action
57.	Spirituality in Industrial Life
58.	Talks in Australia
59.	Talks in Ceylon and California
60.	The Art of Dying While Living

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Sr.	Title
61.	The Ayodhya Challenge
62.	The Benediction of Being Alive*
63.	The Challenge of Contradictions in Indian Polity
64.	The Eloquence of Action
65.	The Eloquence of Living
66.	The Eloquence of Ecstasy
67.	The Flame of Life*
68.	The Meditative Way*
69.	The Message of Chhandogya Part-1
70.	The Message of Chhandogya Part-2
71.	The Mystery of Silence
72.	The Nation on Trial
73.	The Urgency of Self-Discovery*
74.	Through Silence to Meditation
75.	Totality in Essence
76.	Towards Total Transformation
77.	Vigil India*
78.	Vigil on Global Events*
79.	Vimal Dhyan Yoga*
80.	Vimalaji and her Perspective of Life
81.	Vimalaji on Intensive Self Education
82.	Vimalaji on National Problems
83.	Vimalaji's Dialogue with Norwegian Group
84.	Vimalaji's Global Pilgrimage Part-1
85.	Vimalaji's Global Pilgrimage Part-2
86.	Voyage into Oneself*
87.	What is Meditation ?
88.	Where are we Heading to ?*
89.	Why Meditation ?
90.	Yoga Beyond Meditation
91.	Yoga of Silence*

(* this sign shows the books are available in photocopy form)

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Books by Vimala Thakar in other languages

Dutch:

01 Toespraken Universiteit Nijmegen, 1970
02 Toespraken Universiteit Nijmegen, II , 1972
03 Vrouwen en Spiritualiteit
04 Mutatie van de Menselijke Geest
05 Dynamische Stilte, 1974
06 De Dringende noodzaak tot zelfontdekking en het Geheim van de stilte
07 Kan een enkeling iets doen om kernoorlogen te voorkomen?
08 Het leven staat niet stil
09 Zelf op zoek naar waarheid
10 Hartstocht voor het Leven

Esperanto

01 Talk 6 at Hoeven (Netherlands)

French:

01 Un Éternal Voyage
02 La Méditation, un mode de vie
03 La Bénédiction d'être vivant
04 Les Secrets de la Bhagavad Gita
05 L'Énergie du Silence
06 Le Yoga au-delà de la méditation

Portuguese

01 Viver e Relacionar Se
02 Meditacao, Uma Maneira de Viver
03 Mas Alla De La Conciencia
04 Ser y Devenir
05 La Mutacion de la Mente

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Italian:

01 Discorsi sulla meditazions
02 IL Mistero del Silenzio
03 La Mutazione della mente
04 VIVERE (Desiderio di libertà - La meditazione)
05 Lo Yoga oltre la Meditazione
06 Pace Radicale
07 Bhagavad Gîtâ Commento ai capitoli V-VIII Parte prima
08 Ego

German:

01 Die Kraft der Stille
02 Meditation, eine Lebensweise
03 Wo Worte unulenglich sind
04 Flamme des Lebens
05 Von Der Angst zur Liebe
06 Meinne Begegnung mit Krishnamurti

Spanish

01 Espiritualidad y acción social
02 Transformamdonsen investigadones espirituales
03 Significado de la espiritualidad
04 Espiritualidad en la vida cotidiana
05 Espiritualidad y condicionamiento psicológico
06 La bendición de estar vivo
07 Vaije dentro de uno mismo
08 Rumbo a La Transformación Total
09 El Silencio del espacio interior
10 La urgencia por la Libertad
11 Perlas Del Himalaya
12 Desafio a la Juventud

Polish

01 O Przemianie Czlowieka - Spotkania z. J Krishnamurtim

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THE TRIAL OF PATIENCE

While the storm rages wild
resulting in a dance of destruction,
While all the hearts groan and grumble
Under the pressure of fear and violence,
keep your cool, Oh ye, of deep faith
And nurse your tiny light of Love and Compassion.

While brother fights brother blindly,
in the name of Religion or Creed
While neighbour destroys neighbour
in the name of money, sex and power
Keep your cool, Oh ye, of deep faith
And nurse your tiny light of Truth and Compassion.

While representatives turn cruel rulers
Ignoring the dignity of Democracy,
While elections become a mockery
Discarding the frontiers of Deceney
Keep your cool, Oh ye, of deep faith
And awaken the simple people in humility.

While civil liberties are trampled upon
Or are bought and sold shamelessly,
While justice & judges are held hostages
By the power hungry politicians
Keep your cool, Oh ye, of deep faith
And rouse the people to their integrity.

Truth shall win, if we stand for it,
Voilence shall be defeated, if we face it fearlessly.
Hate shall be overcome, if Love holds its own.
And Many shall prevail, if He really wants to
Hence keep your cool, oh every person of faith
And stand up for Truth Love and Compassion.

- Vimala Thakar (29th June, 1984 - Mt.Abu)

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